# TRAVELS

INTO

# FRANCE and ITALY.

IN A

Series of LETTERS to a LADY.

VOL. I.

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56f.

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128a

In TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

Printed for T. BECKET and P. A. DE HONDT, in the *Strand*.

M.DCC.LXXI.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

## LETTER I.

Madam,

IN conſequence of the promiſe you ſo obligingly exacted when I left England, I propoſe to impart whatever appears to me worthy attention; and be perſuaded, every pleaſure, or advantage I may receive from my travels will be infinitely heightened by your ſharing them.—I will not give myſelf the trouble of writing, nor you

that of reading, what is to be found in every common Journaliſt; minute deſcriptions of towns, buildings, hiſtories of reliques, &c. In all theſe, there is ſo much ſameneſs, or folly, they can pretend to no merit, except the addition they make to a volume; therefore ſhall leave them to thoſe who write their travels at home, and have conſequently more leiſure. I will endeavour to amuſe you by a general deſcription of the countries in which I reſide, and a more particular one of the manners and cuſtoms of the inhabitants, as far as I may be in a ſituation to form a judgment: whatever I ſay, ſhall have all the merit truth can give; the failures which will proceed from not having a capacity adequate to my undertaking, I rely upon your candor to pardon. May I not even

hope you will ſhow ſome p rtiality for the head, where the heart is ſo entirely your's. —— I landed at Dieppe; it is a good port, the town has a pleaſing aſpect from the uniformity of the buildings, their only merit. Not finding any objects which deſerved attention, I proceeded immediately to Roüen. Normandy is a beautiful province, I cannot give you a more juſt idea, than by ſaying it reſembles the fineſt counties in England, as well in the produce, as the face of the country, yielding all that is neceſſary to life in the higheſt perfection, and greateſt abundance, except wine, of which there are but ſmall quantities made, and only in the cantons bordering upon the Iſle of France; this defect is well ſupplied in my opinion by the fineſt cyder I ever drank. You will

imagine I am going to fill my letters as Montagne did his eſſays, with the particulars of my taſte: no; as I have not his merits, I will endeavour to avoid this and all faults as far as poſſible, though many foibles may be excuſed in a private letter, which could not in a writing deſigned for the public. — The city of Roüen is large, but ill built; the whole appears unworthy attention, yet upon examination, there are particulars deſerving the higheſt: being the ſeat of a parliament, gives it I think a preference to Caen as a place of reſidence. The premier preſident has diſtinguiſhed himſelf by remonſtrances which are an equal proof of his capacity, and Patriotiſm; it is much to be lamented ſuch talents, when moſt ſtrenuouſly exerted, cannot have a reaſonable hope beyond impunity. When a long-

a longer reſidence has given me an opportunity of receiving information, I ſhall reſume this ſubject; at preſent will ſpeak of objects of ſight, they permitting an immediate judgment. The moſt conſiderable buildings in this city are, the cathedral of Notre Dame, and the church belonging to the Benidictins of St. Oüen, both in the Gothic ſtyle, built by the Engliſh; they are deſervedly eſteemed fine pieces of architecture, but ſo nearly reſembling the principal of the ancient churches in England, they had not the merit of novelty, ſo requiſite to admiration; conſequently I was not pleaſed equal to the expectations of thoſe who attended me, they aſſerting theſe were two of the fineſt edifices in France. What were moſt ſtriking to me, would by no means affect any one who had before

been in a catholic nation, that is the interior ornaments derived from this religion. You have read ſo many authors who give a detail of them, I ſhall not add to their number. In this, as in many other churches, there are eagles amongſt the ornaments; ſome of the company remarked the impropriety of that figure, as it is generally known to be copied from the decorations in the ancient temples of the Romans, who had the higheſt veneration for this bird, as a repreſentative of Jupiter. A lady preſent inſiſted, with great humour, the figure had equal merit as an eccleſiaſtical ornament, being as juſt a repreſentative of the prieſthood, from the character of a bird of prey, as, from its royalty, of Jupiter. The pleaſure of addreſſing you, Madam, is ſo great, I can only prevail with myſelf to

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conclude by the ſuperior one of aſſuring I am with the higheſt reſpect and eſteem,

Your moſt obedient, and

*Roüen.* moſt humble ſervant, &c.

## LETTER II.

TO reſume the ſubject of my laſt, and to do juſtice to the clergy whom the lady rallied, I muſt obſerve, as far as my acquaintance extends, they are perſons of great merit and piety; ſome of them fine orators: their manner of preaching, without notes, and frequently by addreſſes to the audience recalling attention, has ſomething very animated, and adds much to the effect of their eloquence: the Engliſh ſermons

have a great ſuperiority in the cloſet, the French as great from the chair; the firſt ſpeaks principally to reaſon, the latter to the paſſions. Declamation is a talent never neglected by the French, it even enters into the education of girls, who make ſuch a progreſs in this art, or ſcience, many a woman declaims in the higheſt degree of perfection, who can only think and judge in the loweſt.——I have been to pay a viſit to the fathers de la Redemption, et de la Trinité; the inducement was to ſee their gardens, which command a very fine proſpect, the environs of this city being exquiſitely beautiful. You are perhaps unacquainted with this order; the only one in my opinion whoſe exiſtence is uſeful, either to the public or individuals as I can with more eaſe, and

pre-

preciſion, give an idea of this inſtitution, than the beauties of the proſpect, I ſhall begin by ſaying it obliges them to be perpetually employed, ſome at home in raiſing money, others abroad in diſpoſing of thoſe ſums, for the releaſe and conſolation of chriſtian captives, taken by the Turks or Moors; this duty they perform with much fatigue and ſometimes hazard of their lives: their characters are correſpondent to the piety of their inſtitution. Ladies may be of the confraternity; I am acquainted with ſome who are: all their engagement conſiſts in recommending, and making this their principal charity. I heard a ſermon by one of theſe fathers on Trinity Sunday, the great day of the order: the preacher, after treating the ſubject of the feaſt, with a juſt reverence and humility, diſplayed his elo-

eloquence upon the duties required by the inſtitution, and the merit of aſſiſting it; nothing could be more graceful than his action and elocution, which were greatly heightened by frequent references to a picture on the oppoſite ſide of the chapel, where ſome fathers are repreſented treating with the Dey of Algiers. The joy of the perſons releaſed, the anxiety of the captives who attend that happy moment, the deſpair of others on ſeeing the riches of the fathers ſo much inferior to their benevolence, gave the higheſt ſubjects for the rhetoric of the orator, as they had before to the art of the painter; the ſucceſs of the ſpeaker was much, very much beyond that of the artiſt. — I am afraid you will think I am ſeized with the ſpirit of preaching; pardon the firſt and laſt error of this kind; the

preſent

preſent is the only letter where you will ſee me dwell upon the merit of a religious order, however reſpectable ſome individuals may be; but here the whole appears ſo worthy, I cannot conclude till I have ſaid theſe fathers, after as great a part of life ſpent in the duties of their profeſſion as nature will permit, have a houſe of peaceable retirement at Montpelier. I ſpoke to one of them, who is going there, of the poſſibility of a general extinction of religious houſes in France: he anſwered, may the duration be equal to their uſe, ours is leſs neceſſary than when erected, if ever it becomes entirely uſeleſs, I wiſh its deſtruction. A long letter upon ſo grave a ſubject will induce you to give an immediate conſent to the favour I aſk of ſaying I am, Madam,

*Roüen.* Your moſt obedient, &c.

P. S. An anecdote I heard of the King yeſterday, deſerves to be related. Paſſing by la Plaine de Sablons, he ſaw the troops aſſembled for the execution of a ſoldier; aſking the cauſe, was anſwered the man highly merited the puniſhment, for he was a coward, and not willing to ſerve his majeſty. The king replied, Poor fellow; want of courage is a misfortune; let him live, and ſerve me ſome other way. I do not ſay there was any particular wiſdom in the deciſion, (nor could it be general,) but you ſee humanity and mercy, the darling attribute of heaven.

LETTER

## LETTER III.

A Company of players being arrived, I went to ſee them perform. The French, who are very jealous of the honor of their theatre, deſire I will ſuſpend my judgment till I have been at Paris; but I ſay to them as to you, from what I ſee of theſe actors, I conceive the merit of thoſe at the capital muſt be very great. The play I ſaw was les Freres Ennemis; ſure never were wrote four lines with leſs ſenſe, or more mal-a-prôpôs, than thoſe Racine makes Cleon utter upon the death of Antigone;

Ainſi donc vous fuyzez un Amant Odieux
Et vous même cruelle eteignez vos beaux yeux
Vous fermez pour jamais ces beaux yeux que j'adore,
Et pour ne me point voir vous les fermez encore.

Do you not think there is ſomething ſo ingenious in the demonſtration of Antigone's hatred (ſhuting her eyes again after ſhe had ſhut them for ever) that it is impoſſible to find in ancient or modern poetry any thing which can pretend to a compariſon, except the two following lines quoted by the Spectator:

A painted veſt Prince Voltiger had on,
Which from a naked Pict his grandſire won.

Some perſons perhaps would leſſen the merit of my countryman from his antiquity, but there are points where the advantages and privileges of the ancients and moderns are equal. I have heard rhyme is a terrible reſtraint upon a great genius; it may be ſo: but I am ſure it is not unfavorable to a moderate one, for the moſt ordinary

underſtanding could not ſupport the nonſenſe of the above quoted lines, if they had been in proſe: our poem has long been antiquated, for Racine's I am perſuaded ſeveral French read it to this day without diſcovering the abſurdity. As to the impropriety of dwelling upon the beaux yeux of a perſon in Antigone's ſituation, which raiſes a general tenderneſs and affliction inſtead of particular admiration, and the inconſiſtency of love with the general character of Cleon, I do not wonder they receive no cenſure; being in the ſtyle of the nation. I know Racine excuſes himſelf with regard to the faults of this piece, by ſaying it was a juvenile performance. To paſs by the defects in general; yet a boy, if he could write a tragedy at ten years old, would not be pardoned thoſe four lines.

Indeed

Indeed a child could not err ſo much againſt nature. It is aſtoniſhing Racine ſhould not correct or eraſe them, when at a more mature age he wrote the preface to this piece. His Athaliah is a fine poem, and he has ſome other pieces of merit; in general, I do not think he deſerves the great applauſe the French give him; he often falls into the error of drawing all his characters ſo like his countrymen: from whatever nation he takes them, antique or modern, he brings to my remembrance a very common ſtory I have heard, of a painter, who was deſired to paint the ſign of a red lion; as he was only capable of drawing one figure, and that not the requiſite, he made many excuſes to avoid attempting any other; at laſt upon the perſon's inſiſting, he ſaid, if you will have a red lion, you

ſhall

ſhall have a red lyon; but I give you notice, it will be extremely like a roſe.—I am, Madam, with great regard,

*Roüen.* Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER IV.

I AM this moment returned from the Cour, it is the moſt beautiful walk that can be imagined; you paſs the Seine by a bridge of boats, eſteemed a great curioſity; being conſtructed in ſuch a manner, the heavieſt carriages go over with ſafety, and it is opened with much facility for the paſſage of ſhips: on the left of the bridge is the Cour, which is a conſiderable length, planted very beautifully, and though very wide,

covered by the uniting of the trees. The river on one ſide, and the hills riſing into an amphitheatre; the view into the country, in the front, and returning, that of the ſhips, quay, and town in the front; form a ſcene as variegated, and pleaſing, as ever I beheld: this charming Cour is not in general much frequented by people of faſhion; but on Aſcenſion-day, the equipages are very numerous, and the citizens with the peaſants innumerable. I do not know that I was ever more ſtruck with dreſs, than by the variety the female peaſants preſented. The province of Normandy has ſeveral diſtricts, each has a peculiar habit, ſome are very graceful and fine; the women of the Pais de Caux are more diſtinguiſhable by the ſuperiority of their figures than their dreſs, except to

French

French men, who are as much charmed by the one as the other. I could not help thinking I ſaw the inhabitants of twenty different nations, when I was only beholding the peaſants of Normandy, who came from every part of the province, rather to honour the patron ſaint of the city, than the great and general feſtival celebrated the ſame day. This ſaint, as their legend teaches, attended by two malefactors, killed a dragon that laid waſte the country; in memory of this event, the canons of the cathedral have a right to demand the releaſe of one priſoner capitally convicted. A gentleman, who killed his ſervant in a paſſion, received the benefit of this anniverſary. A ridiculous circumſtance is ſaid to have happened ſome years ſince at the proceſſion, when the reliques of the ſaint and fi-

gure of a dragon are carried about the city, an old woman ſo much miſtook the object of veneration, ſhe kneeled and ſaid her Ora pro nobis to the beaſt, inſtead of the ſaint. Incredible as this may appear, the next feſtival gave a proof the woman was not ſingular in her regard for the dragon, though rather outrée. The proceſſion beginning without him, the diſappointment was ſo great, and the fury of the people aroſe to ſuch a height, they threatened to ſet fire to the epiſcopal palace, if the dragon was not produced; in conſequence of this tumult, he was reinſtated in all his honors, which I believe no one ſince has dared to diſpute. Whenever you find my letters neither entertaining nor inſtructive, which I fear will be very often, treat them with the contempt they deſerve,

ſerve, and though I hope you will pardon their defects, do not honor them with ſo precious a tribute as your time. A French man in company has led me into the trivial digreſſion above, but it is my own ſentiments direct, when I have the pleaſure of profeſſing the high eſteem with which I am, Madam,

*Roüen.* Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER V.

LE Palais is worthy attention, the parliament who there preſide, are ſo in a much higher degree; as far as my knowledge permits, I will ſpeak of theſe magiſtrates. I am perſuaded you know the word parliament in France,

has by no means the ſame acceptation as in England; though the perſons who compoſe that, of this nation, aſſert the identity of their original privileges and functions. The diſcuſion of this point would carry me beyond the limits of my preſent deſign; I will only ſay, however reſembling in their origin, the Britiſh has gained, and, perhaps, the French loſt, ſo many privileges, and ſo much power, at preſent there is ſcarce any reſemblance but in name: the principal light in which a French parliament is to be conſidered, as to its effects, is, the firſt court of juſtice in the kingdom; to which all perſons, not content with the judgment of the magiſtrate where they reſide, may appeal: there are likewiſe cauſes never within the cognizance of inferior courts. The parliament is compoſed of preſidents a mor-

mortier, (ſo called from a bonnet or cap they wear) preſidents, and conſeilleirs de parlement; the difference of theſe, conſiſts rather in precedency, and points of honor, than any diſtinct privileges; the preſidents a mortier ſay they repreſent the peers, who compoſed a part of the ancient parliaments; the preſidents claim a ſuperiority over the counſeilleirs, which the latter do not allow; this is certain, they all ſit in judgment together, and give their voices; the advocates anſwering to the counſellors in England, being pleaders. There are conſiderable offices attending the parliament, as procureur-general, &c. all charges are venal, which appears at firſt ſight a great defect; but I am convinced the duties of theſe offices are much better performed, than if the perſons were appointed by the

court: in general, the ſon buys the place of his father, and ſo on for many generations; a certain point of honor deſcends with the office, which could not be expected in thoſe whoſe intereſt with the miniſtry procured this magiſtracy; as in the firſt family honor is joined to perſonal reputation. It is true, ſome rich merchants purchaſe theſe charges for their ſons, as it gives a ſort of nobleſs (though not the firſt); but their number being ſmall, they are carried away by the ſpirit of the body, which is that of the public good, whenever they have the privilege of aſſerting it. In the deciſion of cauſes I believe they are very juſt, many circumſtances combining to render their corruption more difficult than other courts in France. The great number of perſons of ſuperior merit, who compoſe

the parliaments of this nation, makes me wiſh the word Protection was never known, as it is thoſe who have cauſes depending, ſometimes endeavour to form an intereſt with their judges, in a more attentive manner than could be, if ſucceſs was abſolutely impoſſible to be gained by that method. I never conſider the conſtitution and government of other nations, without applauding my own, which I think Monteſquieu obſerves, is as near perfection as any can be, which is formed by mortals.—A ſeat may be bought in parliament at twenty-one, but they have no vote till twenty-five; the early age at which they enter this aſſembly is no inconveniency, on the contrary, requiſite, as they very often have not followed any ſtudy proper to the profeſſion; but the time of giving their

votes

votes ſhould be retarded, their ignorance might be corrected by the knowledge of others, if their youth did not incline them to take their paſſions for their guides. However, the majority will ever be juſt. In general, the women are employed to make intereſt in all affairs in France, even though the principal perſon concerned is of the other ſex; you will pardon me, madam, if I do not imagine it is always their ſuperiority of genius which gives them this preference. Is it not a great defect in the manners of a people, when a woman can quit her dignity and delicacy ſo far, as to become a ſuppliant, and as great a defect in the conſtitution to ſuffer her, if manners could be controlled by laws? I am, madam, with the higheſt reſpect,

*Rotien.* Your moſt obedient, &c.

P. S. At a ſupper where I was preſent, amongſt ſeveral Bon môts which were repeated, one I think is good; it was ſaid upon marſhal Saxe's going to be interred in Germany: What, not one de Profundis for him who gave us ſo many Te Deums! to illuſtrate the lady's wit, perhaps, I ſhould tell you the pſalm de Profundis is ſung before the corpſe in the burial ſervice of the Roman church. I thought none but a Roman catholic could have been Marſhal of France; am told they made this objection to Saxe; who anſwered, My ſword is a good catholic; which was accepted without any farther profeſſion. Be this as it will, hiſtorical truth is not neceſſary to what I have related: perhaps the occaſion was made for the Bon môt, inſtead of the Bon môt for the occaſion. The French are ſo fond

of

of this kind of wit, they have a ſaying, Que les Francois ſe damneront pour un Bon môt.

## LETTER VI.

I WAS laſt night at the Cid, a piece which though it gave riſe to the beſt ſatyr in this language, yet gave me very great pleaſure; an Engliſh man does not inſiſt upon being pleaſed according to rules, or he could not be ſo highly charmed by Shakeſpear: Corneille, in the tragedy of which I am ſpeaking, has ſucceeded better than the French generally do in foreign characters; they are more acquainted with the Spaniſh than any nation, except

tept the Engliſh, and have from the Royal Relation, connections with them, they have not with us. I do not think the French writers ſucceed in Britiſh characters, with them we are all mercantile and rough; they do not comprehend the variety in England: a commercial nation we certainly are, and compared to the French, perhaps our manners in general may be plain; but amongſt a great number of other characters, you may ſee in England more accompliſhed men, and as fine gentlemen, as any that ornament the court of France. The Spaniſh character is known and repreſented with more facility than the Engliſh, as it conſiſts of few points ſtrongly marked, not in the leaſt diverſified. The French, though public intereſt and alliances unite them to the Spaniards, yet think

and

and ſpeak of that nation with hatred and contempt; I know not from whence this can proceed, except contrariety of diſpoſition. I have obſerved the moſt diſtinguiſhed merit can ſcarce reconcile the French to a grave reſerved character: they look upon the Spaniſh nation as in a ſtate of total ignorance and darkneſs; of which the following fable, quoted againſt them by a wit of my acquaintance, is a proof; it is new to me, an idea it may be the ſame to you, engages me to give it as near as the tranſlation will permit in the words of the ſpeaker——

" Adam being deſirous to know and ſee his race, whoſe numbers had overſpread the earth, and Fame had reached the Heavens; particularly the Europeans as the moſt diſtinguiſhed; deter-

mined to viſit the celebrated nations of this part of the globe. He deſcended in the kingdom of France: arts, agriculture, arms, and architecture had ſo entirely changed the face of the earth, and the inhabitants, he immediately diſclaimed them as his offspring. He then turned his ſteps to Germany, Holland, and England; yet found nothing to awaken his paternal affection: but the moment he caſt his eyes upon the Spaniſh realms, the great progenitor's heart was filled with rapture: Behold! ſaid he, Theſe, Theſe, are my true Children, in whom time has made no change; they and their country are in the ſame ſtate that I and nature left them."

This Fable has, in my opinion, as much praiſe, as reproach, though the latter

latter is intended. If the Spaniards have made leſs improvements in the arts and ſciences, than other nations, they have, as I am informed, and as this ſatyr allows, preſerved a greater degree of truth and ſincerity: qualities which in the affairs of life, highly compenſate every deficiency, and no others can ſupply their defect; even in ſociety they are the moſt pleaſing and requiſite. Wit and knowledge may charm for a time, but laſting ſatisfaction can alone be found where truth is the dictator; witneſs the hours, days, and years, perſons of ſuperior genius paſs with thoſe, from whoſe converſation they can receive no joy, or ſolace, except hearing and ſpeaking with freedom. I know a coterie in France compoſed of perſons who have ſeen each other almoſt every day for twenty years, without

any other tye than friendſhip; the greateſt talents cannot find topics conſtantly intereſting in themſelves, but all become ſo in ſuch a ſociety; liberty and truth give charms beyond expreſſion to the meereſt trifle. "To many vices a man may be inclined by conſtitution (ſays a good writer) but no man is a conſtitutional liar;" far otherwiſe, we not only enter the world true, but continue the ſame, till ſometimes, finding we play ſterling againſt counters, to be upon a par with others we quit that virtue which has no equivalent; in the pleaſing view of paſſing my life in an union, I hope truth herſelf has formed, I am, Madam,

*Roüen.* Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER VII.

THE Roman or civil law prevails in this nation: the progreſs I have made in this ſtudy, though not conſiderable, is yet ſufficient to add much to my pleaſure in reading the extraordinary trials, which have been decided by the parliaments; you may have them in England by the title of Les Cauſes Celebres, they are ill writ, but from the particularity of the ſubjects, are both amuſing and inſtructive; and the deciſions, which are in general by the civil law, appear to me ſo eaſy and natural, reaſon alone might direct them; add to the general laws, each province has its peculiar cuſtoms and privileges, by which the inhabitants are to be judged

judged with regard to inheritances, and many other affairs; a knowledge of these customs requires a long residence in this nation, and much study; at the same time is useless to a stranger; the great variety of these customs produce so many inconveniencies, it has been proposed to make a general code for the kingdom. The attachment of each province to its particular usages, has hitherto, and I believe ever will prevent this scheme taking place. I have heard the parliaments have had a desire to form themselves into one body, but the strength they might acquire by such an union, is too well apprehended for that union ever to be permitted; how greatly the parliament of Bretagne has distinguished itself is well known, and the consequences. The members are all persons of high birth, to which

their ſentiments are adequate; in them has been ſeen to what the privilege of remonſtrances are reduced; the privilege is no leſs than giving counſel to the king, but the effects are frequently no other than might be expected from a petition, except the danger. I do not find the moſt ſpirited remonſtrances at preſent are attended with any other conſequences, than the diſgrace of the authors by the court, and the applauſe of a few wiſe men; all ſtruggles are vain for the liberty of thoſe who have not the ſpirit to deſire and aſſert this bleſſing, the greateſt mortals can know, if they have been accuſtomed to it; but there muſt be a total change in the manners and ſentiments of the French to render them capable of enjoying ſuch happineſs. The ſubject in which I am engaged appears too diffuſive for a letter,

ter, I shall for this reason leave the remainder for a particular treatise or conversation, that I may, as I proposed, give you a general and clear idea of the Parliaments in this nation, which I have not at present. The ideas I could wish you to have in the highest perfection, are those regarding the fidelity and respect of, Madam,

*Roüen.* Your most obedient, &c. &c.

## LETTER VIII.

I Have been to pay a visit to the Poor Claires: convents are places I do not much frequent; but this being composed entirely of English, it was a compliment due to the nuns; it is of all orders the most rigid, being a reform

upon the Benedictins: they do not appear even at a grate; a wall with iron ſpikes was between us during the converſation; their voices are ſo attenuated by faſting and mortification, they ſounded like that of Lungs in the Alchymiſt, when he ſays the fire burns blue; they have a great though miſtaken piety; a lady of the Vavaſour family preſides with ſuperior merit: wherever the Engliſh have convents, they are diſtinguiſhed even by the French; but it is a reputation I ſhould never wiſh them to acquire, as I think they are too valuable in every character of life to quit it. I was preſent not long ſince when a beautiful young girl took the habit, but that beauty will ſoon be faded by the auſterities of her life: ſhe performed the ceremony with great chearfulneſs, when ſhe quitted

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the habit of the world, the ornaments of which ſhe flings from her with the greateſt diſdain; ſhe diſappeared for ſome time, then came into the choir in a white habit and garland of flowers; the choir is very long, and with the nuns arranged on each ſide in black, and ill-dreſt, (for they wear their habits nine years) ſhe really looked like ſomething deſcended from the heavens; it was impoſſible to behold this amiable figure without the utmoſt regret; for notwithſtanding the ſatisfaction which then appeared in her countenance, I fear ſhe will ere long have other ſentiments: but to leave ſo melancholy a ſubject, I will relate a chearful event, told to me by a ſuperior of a convent; a young lady was ſent to one of theſe religious houſes by her parents, who intended (as is moſt cruelly and fre-

quently the caſe) to force her to take the veil; ſhe having far other views for herſelf, beſought them moſt humbly and earneſtly to releaſe her; but was only anſwered by the moſt cruel threats if ſhe did not comply with their commands: at length, ſhe conſented to fix the day; when amidſt the concourſe of people, who attended the ceremony, was ſeen a young gentleman, to whom the intended nun's affections were known to be engaged; nor was there any objection to the marriage, except the other children being not ſo rich: all the ſpectators were ſurprized the gentleman could be preſent at a ceremony, that was melancholy even to indifferent people who have ſentiment; but how great was their aſtoniſhment increaſed, when upon the lady's approach, inſtead of the uſual ceremony,

ſhe

ſhe declared in the form of marriage, ſhe took that gentleman for her huſband; to which he anſwered in the ſame terms, agreeable to their engagement: the confuſion of the parents being too great to expreſs an immediate diſapprobation, the contract, being made in the preſence of the biſhop, was judged good, and the marriage followed. I ſhould imagine the parents were glad to compromiſe the affair, for they had intended to commit an action as unlawful, as the lady's marrying without their conſent. If upon theſe occaſions a girl has courage, and friends to aſſiſt her, in making a proteſt before ſhe takes the veil, her vow, as being involuntary, is void; but they are in general ſo frightened, watched, and perſuaded, very few can defend themſelves. It is thought a parent's power cannot

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be too extenſive, experience will convince that of doing ill cannot be too limited in any perſon. I am, with great eſteem, Madam,

*Rouen.* Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER IX.

YOU deſire me to ſpeak of the amuſements in this city; we have ſometimes plays, a public concert once a week, and private every day: I go to the latter, as they are the reſort of the beſt company, but cannot ſay I have much taſte for French muſic; of that, at the theatre, I am deſired to ſuſpend my judgment till I arrive at Paris, though here are ſome fine hands, particularly a lady, whoſe aſſemblies I

frequent; her leaſt excellency is being the greateſt miſtreſs of muſic I ever heard: you will imagine cards have their ſhare in the diverſions, though I eſcape them very well: dancing is a talent in which the French are known to excel, but do not exerciſe much more than the Engliſh: in England, generally ſpeaking, the ladies ſurpaſs the men in this art, here it is the reverſe, the women being very often educated in convents, and in ſome of thoſe houſes, they do not permit a dancing-maſter; ſuch a reſtraint alone can make thoſe people dangerous: I ſpend two or three evenings in a week with a ſelect coterie of ſeveral ladies, who have ſuperior talents and merit, ſome gentlemen of the robe, and an officer, who adds to the ſcience of his profeſſion, (in which he has been diſ-

tinguiſhed)

tinguiſhed) a general knowledge of arts and letters: what renders this ſociety particularly agreeable, is the greateſt equality, and at the ſame time contraſt of genius; the former gives eaſe, and the latter variety to their converſation: the robe is not eſteemed a very high rank in France, except in a parliament town; I ſhould in places prefer their ſociety to any other, (I mean the haute robe) becauſe I think they are in general the moſt ſenſible and beſt inſtructed: a parliament is a very valuable addition to a place where one reſides, as it furniſhes a certain number of people, who are obliged to think, (an occupation in which the French do not delight) and though ſome may neglect this obligation, the number of thoſe who do not, will always be large enough to form a very

good

good ſociety: you have ſeen in Voltaire, though a colonel, (and I know inferior officers) may dine with the king, a chancellor cannot; but I conclude the king may break through the etiquette if he pleaſes: he is not ſo diſpoſed, if it is true that he forbad mademoiſſelle D'eguilly, the famous Amazon, to hunt with him after ſhe married a preſident: I ſhould not imagine his majeſty could be ſo defective in politeneſs to the ſex. As to the general contempt for the robe, and honor for the gens d'epée, it is too much the intereſt of the court to be continued: notwithſtanding theſe courtly ſentiments, many of the parliament are good gentlemen of birth, have all high rank in their province, and great merit to the nation. I ſet out to-morrow for Amiens, an agreeable party inclining

me to take this detour, inſtead of going directly to Paris; wherever I turn my ſteps, my inclinations are with her to whom I am

A moſt obedient, &c. &c.

## LETTER X.

UPON my arrival at Amiens, the capital of Picardy, I enquired for the objects which deſerved attention; they ſhowed me the cathedral, a very fine large edifice, with a profuſion of carving and ornaments, as uſual in Gothic buildings; it has been a diſpute whether this church is a work of the Engliſh or French, the preſent deciſion is in favour of the latter, to which I ſubmit; ſome of the carvings are ap-

apparently Engliſh from their ſubjects; if the French chuſe to claim them, I do not think they deſerve a conteſt. I might have ſeen, as the Sacriſtan aſſured me, the real hand of John the Baptiſt, but as I have heard of a gentleman who has ſeen ſeven equally authenticated, I did not think one a curioſity worth regarding. From the cathedral I went to the Lautoir, a beautiful and extenſive walk, much preferable to the ramparts: the French embelliſh theſe ſort of public places more than we do; indeed we have ſcarce any in provincial towns, and in France few boroughs are without them: the plantations on the public roads add much to their beauty, and that of the country. Amiens is a great trading city; I ſhould rather ſay, moſt of the inhabitants are engaged in commerce, but it

is very far from being in a flouriſhing ſtate. The genius of the French is by no means adapted to buſineſs, the great paſſion for dreſs and diſſipation in the low people, is incompatible with the ſpirit of commerce. Lyons and ſome other towns ſucceed from the great advantage of their ſituation; but wherever the principal hopes are founded upon French induſtry, they will fall to the ground: the nature of their government, tends to the encouragement of idleneſs, as does their religion; the great number of convents, holidays, perpetual proceſſions, the prodigious ſtanding army, which takes the men from their labour when young, and ſends them home to increaſe the number of beggars when old; all theſe cauſes combining, it is no wonder here are, as I am informed, three thouſand

Poor

poor in the ſtreets, and thirty thouſand upon the biſhop's liſt; more than a third of the inhabitants.---It is in general the faſhion for the Nobleſſe, who are not rich enough to go to Paris, to make the capital of the province their place of reſidence for the greateſt part of the year; but Abbeville is preferred, at preſent, to Amiens. After what I have ſaid, you will not be ſurprized I ſpend my time rather in ſtudy, than ſociety. I would pay a viſit to the celebrated Monſ. Greſſet, author of the Vert Vert, who reſides in this city; but as he is grown a devôt, I am afraid he ceaſes to be a wit. I am told, before his converſion (as it is called) the biſhop threatened him with puniſhment, for the juſt and happy ridicule with which he had attacked the nuns, in the above-mentioned poem; he only an-

ſwered, he had another piece, of equal force, ready for the preſs, againſt the ſecular clergy. The biſhop thought proper to make peace, by giving ſuch benefices as his ſituation permitted him to accept; for though educated, with the intentions of his friends, to be a jeſuit, he quitted that ſociety, and married. As I have mentioned the biſhop, it will be but juſtice to ſay, he is equally diſtinguiſhed for his piety and morality, with an unaffected, affable, and chearful behaviour to all who preſent themſelves. It is impoſſible, when you firſt reflect upon the merit of this venerable old man, not to think with Pope,

For modes of faith let graceleſs zealots fight;
His can't be wrong, whoſe life is in the right.

But, upon farther conſideration, though one cannot approve of fighting, yet it muſt be wiſhed, as his zeal is ſo great,

that his faith was as pure as his life; for he makes more converts to the former, than the latter. I am,

Madam,

*Amiens.*

Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XI.

I THIS moment paid a viſit to a perſon who is eſteemed a great genius; I cannot ſay he appeared in that light to me; and this merit muſt be granted to the French, whatever talents or knowledge they poſſeſs, thoſe who converſe with them never fail to receive every poſſible benefit and ſatisfaction which can be derived from a communicative diſpoſition: it is certain greater

advantages may be reaped from the ſociety of French, who have a moderate ſhare of knowledge, than from many Engliſh, who have the moſt extenſive; at leaſt, when the acquaintance is ſhort: as it is probable the latter may not impart any degree of his ſcience; and it is poſſible the former will be ſo generous as to give the whole. I have known ſome perſons in England, who would rather be for ever ſilent than ſpeak any thing in general ſociety, unbecoming the genius which diſtinguiſhes them. This character has certainly much dignity; but dignity is inconſiſtent with the general humor of the French. Vive la bagatelle is their language, and their actions are correſpondent. The communicative diſpoſition of this nation, is ſometimes diſagreeable, but is frequently

uſeful

useful to a stranger. They add to this desire of talking, an astonishing curiosity; which proceeds from an incapacity of entertaining themselves, and is highly inconsistent with that good breeding fame has given them: they will ask every possible question concerning yourself, family and affairs, and in return leave nothing unsaid which regards theirs: the misfortune is, I and most English are too incurious to render the pleasure reciprocal. I have often been in French company, who justify the following observation of La Bruyere, Ils parlent un moment avant que de penser: a Frenchman alone could have had that idea. I must say this for an excuse, if they waited for thought to precede their words, they would, in general, be for ever silent. To keep myself in humor with a nation, in which I propose to

reſide ſome time, I have only to reflect upon the great merit of ſome of my acquaintance, or take up a good author: I am going to Boileau at preſent; a ſatyr may appear an odd remedy; but have you not ſometimes obſerved people are moſt eaſily relieved from an ill temper, by thoſe who have the ſame in a greater degree. In every diſpoſition you will find me equally, with the higheſt reſpect,

Madam,

*Amiens.* Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XII.

THE Porte Saint Denis, by which I entered Paris, is very handſome; the city in general is not adequate to ſo fine

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an entrance; the ſtreets are extremely narrow, and in all points much inferior to thoſe of London: here are ſome very beautiful places; Vendome pleaſes by the regularity of the buildings; but that and the Place de Victoires, are much leſs than ſeveral ſquares in London. The Place de Louis Quinze, will be extremely fine, in all reſpects, when it is finiſhed. The Hotels already erected, are moſt magnificent, and of exquiſite architecture: thoſe of the nobility, in general, are very grand, much ſurpaſſing the houſes of perſons of the ſame rank in England: but the citizens of London are better lodged than people of that claſs in Paris. The capital of each nation demonſtrates the ſpirit of its government: Paris has moſt magnificence; London is more equally handſome. Luxury and po-

verty, riches and eaſe, form the characters and contraſt of theſe great cities. In Paris, the whole expence of the kingdom, is for the king and nobility; in London, for the people in general. St. James's is called a palace, as it is the lodging of a king: the Louvre, Luxemburg, &c. command this title from their own grandeur and magnificence. However inferior we may be in royal buildings, England has raiſed to God, and built for the public, edifices, to which France can ſhew no equal. The walks in Paris are very charming; but of theſe you have heard ſo much from your acquaintance, I ſhall not enter into particulars. Moſt of the hotels of the nobility have gardens, and all courts, which renders them more agreeable to the inhabitants, but leſs ornamental to the city. I was

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walking in the Thuilleries, with a man of quality, the other day, and remarking the great number of palaces the king of France never inhabits, particularly the Luxemburg (which is repairing, though unfiniſhed) I ſaid, laughing, I wiſhed one of them could be tranſported into England, for the uſe of his Britannick Majeſty. To my infinite ſurprize he anſwered, with great warmth, he ſuppoſed I had rather ſee the king of England poſſeſs it in France; adding, that day would never arrive. It was with difficulty I convinced him my meaning did not go beyond my expreſſion, aſſuring him, at the ſame time, the wiſhes of the Engliſh were not greater than thoſe of the French. I acknowledge, in this affair, Le Bruyere's obſervation might, in ſome degree, be applied to me; but

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I have not hitherto lived with people who are ſuſceptible; I find they are more ſo in the capital, than the provinces. They are ſenſible of the ſuperiority we had in the late war, and think we are as much elated, as I have heard that nation was when ſucceſs was theirs; this inclines them ſometimes to conſtrue as an affront, what is intended as a compliment. A French gentleman obſerving the ſuperiority of the Engliſh in their knowledge of languages, was anſwered, C'eſt un acquit qui ne vous eſt point neceſſaire, car pour la langue, vous, donnez le ton a toute l'Europe, et vous monſieur, ſaid the Frenchman, in anger, Vous le donnez ſur les armes: How can we love the Engliſh? they more than hate, they deſpiſe us. Theſe ſentiments have been taken from Engliſh authors, which it is the mode to ſtudy

ſtudy, or rather read; for no one who viſits this kingdom, and is received into the ſocieties, could be ſo ill-bred and impolitic, as to ſay any thing that might offend, except by accident; which could not have ſo ſtrong an effect. Whatever are the ſentiments of the nation, the Engliſh are, in general, well received; many give their eſteem and merit; it ſhould be reciprocal. High as Voltaire has drawn the character of the French nobleſſe, in point of honor, he has not more than rendered them juſtice. Whenever the arms of this nation are attended with ſucceſs, the glory is all theirs: the love of life and pleaſure are ſo ſtrong in the French, there can be no principle to balance it in the common people; but the high ſentiment of honor in the nobleſſe, is more than equivalent to any

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diſadvantage they may receive from nature and education. The nobility, in general, are much leſs learned than in England: this is not ſurprizing upon reflection; favor at court is the firſt merit, and arms the only honorable means of ſerving their country; conſequently the ſcience they moſt endeavour to acquire. Education, in general, is much inferior to the Britiſh. The wiſe and unprejudiced part of the nation, are ſenſible, and lament that it is ſo. The partizans of the Jeſuits aſſert their expulſion will be injurious to the public in this point: they certainly poſſeſs much learning; but I cannot ſay here are great proofs they communicated their knowledge to the kingdom in general. The fathers of the oratory, who had before a conſiderable ſhare in the education of youth, will now

now have a greater. Theſe are a ſet of learned and honeſt men, who, perhaps, may give as much knowledge, with better principles, to their pupils; they are not engaged by vows, but live in a ſociety which they are always at liberty to quit; but generally continue in to the end of life, if no particular event recalls them to the world. Some of theſe fathers have been charged with Janſeniſm; an accuſation not uncommon againſt thoſe who regard morality as an eſſential part of religion, either by their doctrine, or their lives. I know a prieſt who, in a ſermon, told the women of his pariſh, they had much better be faithful wives, good mothers, and peaceable neighbours, than viſit Notre Dame de Clery, and there make vows to wear white or brown: he was immediately called a Janſeniſt, and,

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in a more conſpicuous ſituation, might have been interdicted; for his life would witneſs againſt him, being perfect as that of man can be. I know a gentleman who ſaid, he thought there could not be difference enough between the Engliſh and French nation, to make the latter worth viſiting; nothing would ſerve him but the Antipodes; I think, in ſome points, he might here find them in ſentiments. I am,

Madam,

*Paris.*

Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XIII.

I HAVE been at the Palais Royal; it is impoſſible to expreſs the pleaſure I received from the large and valuable

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collection of paintings with which it is ornamented. I had much regret in ſeeing ſome, that once adorned the palaces of the kings of England, and were ſold by Oliver Cromwell. To ſpeak of all the pictures, with my ſentiments upon them, would make a large volume; the catalogue makes a ſmall one: indeed the great quantity and variety ſcarce leave a power of dwelling upon any; yet one has ſo particularly ſtruck me, I wiſh I could give the ideas as ſtrong as they are imprinted on my mind: this admirable piece is the Madona with the child Jeſus, and St. John; nothing can exceed the beauty, nor the propriety of the beauty, given to the virgin. In our Saviour, the innocence of the child is blended with the wiſdom of the divinity, in a moſt marvellous manner. In St John, the pro-

priety

pricty of character is equally preſerved; amidſt the beautiful ſmiles of the playing infant, may be diſcerned the growing ſanctity of the preacher: this piece is by Raphael; it is ſtyled, La Jardiniere, from the dreſs of the Madona. I was ſo highly pleaſed with theſe paintings, I ſat at home the whole evening to enjoy them in idea. I have been at the Luxemburg palace to ſee the gallery; Rubens' deſign is very great, and the paintings are a juſt and noble ornament to the apartment; but there are too many faults, nor are their beauties high enough to place them, or their author, in the rank they receive from the French: the prints which you have ſeen, give a more exact idea of theſe paintings than is poſſible for my pen. The hotels of the nobleſſe have ſome very valuable paintings. The

Duke Rochfoucault has rendered to Hamilton the honor he merits, by giving a place to his picture of innocence; a piece of at leaſt as much character as any this age has produced; nothing can be more happily expreſſed than the beauty and whole perſon of his figure; and the ſcene in which ſhe is placed is perfectly correſpondent: for the exact account of the buildings, and other objects of curioſity and admiration, which Paris contains, I refer you to the books I have ſent to England; when I have the happineſs of ſeeing you, will endeavour to reform whatever the partiality, or ignorance of the writer may miſrepreſent. There are many French who never have been five leagues from Paris, who would write very confidently

Pont Neuf is the fineſt bridge in the world, and St. Sulpice the firſt church, &c. the generality of them, are like the lady who found the world moſt amazingly large, when ſhe had travelled from Paris to Etampes. They ſeldom travel; this is not to be imputed to them as a fault; but that they have by intuition, a knowledge which others acquire by great expence of money and time, is what I cannot poſſibly grant. The circumſtance of being long abſent from a beloved perſon, is alone a pain too great to be repaid by the pleaſures of travelling, or even by the acquiſition of the higheſt knowledge, as far as it can regard oneſelf; but the idea of being ſerviceable to my country, and the hopes of being more agreeable, where I already flatter myſelf with a preference,

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are motives which give ſpirit and agreement to the preſent ſituation of,

Madam,

*Paris.* Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XIV.

IN ſpeaking of the diverſions of Paris, I ſhall begin with the opera; of which the French boaſt much, with little reaſon. The Coup D'œil, is certainly very fine; all the advantages that can be derived from machinery and decorations are given to this entertainment: but ſure muſic ſhould, at leaſt, make a part of the merit of an opera; and I am certain a perſon muſt have French ears, or none, who can receive pleaſure

from this performance at Paris. Caſtor and Pollux, is eſteemed, by the French, one of their beſt compoſitions, in which what ſhould be muſic is noiſe, and the ſinging extravagant ſcreams. The dancing, I acknowledge very fine, that it is the forte of the opera they are very ſenſible, as may be ſeen from the great uſe they make of it. Gods and devils, men and women, on every occaſion compoſing a ball, ſome deſcending, others ariſing, for this grand purpoſe: in ſhort, the ſun and moon dancing a minuet, would be no burleſque here; on the contrary, they would meet with high applauſe; and if, by their influence, the ſtars could be perſuaded to ſtep down, and form a little cottillon, the whole houſe would be in raptures. A gentleman from Italy, and myſelf, were the only diſcontented perſons

ſons at this performance: though I have not been in that muſical nation, I will affirm, none but a vitiated ear can preſer the French to the Italian muſic. Rouſſeau obſerves, performing a piece of the compoſition of each nation before a ſavage, the pleaſure he will demonſtrate from hearing the Italian, and pain from the French, are ſtrong declarations of nature, in favor of the former. Without calling in the ſavages (whom a little afraid to truſt from their known love of noiſe) the judgment of every poliſhed nation (except their own) is deciſive enough againſt the French. To allow all the merit that can be given them, they have great execution; and it muſt be this excellence which has inclined ſome of my countrymen to ſpeak in favor of

French muſic, and muſicians, as, to my ſurprize, I have heard them. I believe I ſhall not be ſingular in declaring (on the contrary, it is almoſt too general a ſentiment to write) expreſſion is what I principally ſeek in muſic, and every other ſcience where it can poſſibly enter: it is the great talent of the Italians, whenever they do not chuſe rather to raiſe wonder than give delight. The only ſort of muſic I hear with pleaſure in France, is the little Vaudevilles, or ballads, ſung at table; and in theſe the ladies particularly excel, by the ſpirit and expreſſion with which they embelliſh them; though I cannot ſay the ſubjects are always adapted to a female performer, as they are ſometimes inconſiſtent with that delicacy and modeſty which is the ornament of your ſex,

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and ſo highly diſtinguiſhes her, to whom I am,

A moſt obedient, &c.

P. S. I was at an aſſembly laſt night, where, as uſual in France, the attention of the men was ſo great and particular, a ſtranger in this kingdom would have imagined the whole company had attachments; but by the characters of ſome perſons, I am perſuaded ſo general a cenſure would have been unjuſt. I have known ſeveral women who received attention meerly from an idea there was an impropriety in being unattended. It is certain we ſhould not judge of every nation by the Engliſh. Public buſineſs, ſtudy, horſe-races, &c. engage us ſo much, few will give their whole time to a woman without ſome view. I do believe, very often,

ten, in France, an opportunity of trifling away all their time, is the ſole reward expected, or beſtowed: be this as it will, the faſhion is convenient for thoſe who are not ſo innocent.

*Paris.*

## LETTER XV.

I AM very happy when I can give applauſe to the talents of a nation againſt whom we are ſuppoſed to be prejudiced: the higheſt is due to what I call the French Theatre, from its ſuperiority: the merit of their authors is known to you; that of their actors is adequate to the greateſt. We have, in England, ſome performers who cannot be excelled; but thoſe who play

play the ſecond roles, are frequently very indifferent: here every part is equally ſuſtained. I have ſeen the Merope, and Semiramis of Voltaire; which I think pieces of great merit; they have exquiſite ſtrokes of nature, and what does not always happen in theatrical compoſitions, the moral is fine, and particularly adapted to the nation for whom it is wrote; where, from the diſſipated humor of the people, as well as the relief given by the Roman Catholic, remorſe for a wicked action may ſometimes wear off too ſoon. The French do not eſteem Voltaire's plays the beſt of his works: they are not thoſe which require, nor demonſtrate moſt genius; but I think ſome of them are more perfect than any thing he has wrote, and have the higheſt of all merits; they may be uſeful, and cannot be

injurious to mankind. —— I have not been ſo fortunate in the comedies repreſented as tragedies: of the former, Le Legataire, by Renard, is one at which I was preſent: it has great humor, and the actors rendered perfect juſtice to the ſpirit of the author; but I do not like the plan of the play: the hero, if the nephew is to be regarded in that light, is not rogue enough to give deteſtation; yet far from being ſufficiently honeſt for imitation. If the ſervants are to be conſidered as a principal part, this circumſtance alone, to me, is an objection: the actors are ſo excellent in comedy and tragedy, it is difficult to ſay in which they are ſuperior: Mademoiſſelle du Meſnil has great merit in the latter, and many others who are her inferiors; but, upon the whole, I think comedy has the preference.

ference. The French have, in general, a ſurprizing talent for repreſentation; they have great quickneſs of ſight; the livelineſs of their diſpoſition inclines them to action in common converſation: add to theſe qualifications, having rather a general than particular character, they, with much facility, aſſume that proper to the occaſion, and the perſonage they repreſent. I have before obſerved, declamation is common to them all; I may likewiſe ſay, a modeſt aſſurance.

The muſic of the petit opera is very pleaſing; but I cannot approve a piece joined to this entertainment, where Harlequin is the hero and orator: his wit conſiſts in blunders; ſuch as ſaying, he was ſhipwrecked contre un Ecureuil, inſtead of an Ecueil: all the grimace and humor with which he uttered this

ſpeech could not make me ſmile, though I had never heard it before; but the whole houſe were in the loudeſt laugh, to whom, I am perſuaded, it had not even the merit of novelty. The French, who are in general œconomiſts, are particularly ſo in their jeſts. I once travelled with a party who amuſed themſelves two days in ſtealing a gentleman's ſnuff-box; every repetition gave equal pleaſure, and when they ſeparated, the loſs of ſo much humor was mutually regretted. I would not be thought to infer from hence, this kingdom has not many perſons of excellent ſociety; I know it has, and their merit is greater from the difficulties with which it ſtruggles and ſurmounts. In general, the Engliſh excel the French in wit and humor, as much as in ſolid ſenſe and learning; as

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may be eaſily ſeen from a compariſon of the underſtandings of the people of each nation, who are a more juſt ſtandard than their ſuperiors; their advantages being more nearly equal, though far from being perfectly ſo. The bleſſings of a free government, and the Proteſtant religion, are too great and extenſive for any one to judge of all their good and high effects, but by living ſometime in a nation that does not enjoy them. It is ſurprizing to hear Engliſhmen (as I have done) approve and extol the Police of Paris; a Police which, by the awe it ſtrikes, ſubdues the ſpirit, and deſtroys the freedom of converſation, and almoſt that of thinking: I know it may be ſaid it only limits the mind on certain ſubjects; but are not they the moſt intereſting in nature? and does not reſtraint on theſe weaken

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the underſtanding for every other, except the Allard and opera ſingers? The preſent king has nothing to fear from freedom of ſpeech, or freedom of action in his ſubjects: in general he is exceſſively beloved, and the few who are diſcontented and capable of judging, ſay, his good qualities are his own, his defects thoſe of education, and the cuſtoms of his country; from the only quarter he was in danger, the Police was of no uſe; for it did not prevent the aſſaſſination in which the jeſuits were ſuppoſed to be concerned. I have heard a Police of this nature is requiſite for the ſecurity of the inhabitants; but thoſe who imagine there are leſs murders, or other crimes, in this city than London, are much miſtaken, or I am miſinformed: the cuſtom of publiſhing every event in the papers, makes

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us appear more guilty than our neighbours, who are ſilent. However, let the Police employ as many ſpies as they pleaſe for the detection of villains, in this point it cannot be too induſtrious; but that an honeſt country gentleman, or any honeſt man ſhould be ſubject to the ſame inquiſition, is highly unreaſonable. A perſon aſſuring me, ſociety in Paris was much inferior to what it is in many provincial towns; added, he never paſſed through the ſtreet where the Baſtile is without fear and trembling; though he always converſed with a reſerve, to which he imputed the inſipidity of converſation in this capital. He is a man of ſenſe, and a man of ſpirit, truly attached to the king; but a pique might have deprived him of his liberty. I have heard a general complaint it is difficult to be introduced

to the beſt company in Paris: with regard to certain coteries, no faſhion, however great, is ſufficient; as if once ſtrangers were admitted, the freedom of converſation, for which they meet, would be deſtroyed. As for aſſemblies in general, a very moderate recommendation will preſent any man who is a gentleman, and will play at cards; and if he will game, no other introduction is requiſite, to the greateſt and moſt brilliant company in Paris. La Bruyere's obſervation, that the higheſt genius will not put a man upon a par with thoſe who can loſe a thouſand piſtoles upon a card, is quite as true, with regard to theſe aſſemblies, at this day, as when he wrote. As to the private coteries, in many there are no cards; and a perſon muſt have wit, or what paſſes with the company as ſuch,

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and his honor known to ſome of the ſociety, before he is received: the circumſtances cannot often attend thoſe who have not ſpent ſome time in the provinces, nor all who have: but the public entertainments, curioſities, and houſes eaſy of acceſs, are ſufficient to amuſe, if people do not make a long reſidence in Paris; and if they do, conſequently a greater facility will attend making acquaintance with perſons of merit. Thoſe who are moſt worthy to be known, are never the firſt to preſent themſelves in any country.—The pleaſure of addreſſing you, Madam, has made me unattentive to the length of my letter; to which I will only add, I am, with every ſentiment of eſteem and reſpect,

*Paris.* Yourmoſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XVI.

I DINED yeſterday, in a French houſe, with ſome Canadians; from them I had the pleaſure of hearing the higheſt and moſt honorable praiſes of my countrymen. It is unneceſſary to obſerve, they were perſons of much underſtanding and generoſity of ſentiment: for thoſe qualities were abſolutely requiſite to render juſtice to a conquering enemy, by whoſe bravery they had been great ſufferers; but every other idea was loſt in thoſe of the humanity and politeneſs of their conquerors. I have heard a gentleman, who is a good judge, remark, the Canadians are, in general, more intelligent than other

French:

French; as far as I am acquainted, the obſervation is juſt. A gentleman in company related an event, which demonſtrates a man is in danger of loſing his liberty in this kingdom, more from the pique or ignorance of inferior magiſtrates, than the court: it is true, with regard to the former there is generally redreſs; but a few weeks confinement may ſometimes be of infinite conſequence. Permit me to give the relation, as I had it from the gentleman who was going to the waters of Barege for his health. Far advanced in the South, as he was at maſs, ſuddenly the church was ſurrounded, and he taken priſoner, as an Engliſh ſpy (it was in time of war): He deſired leave to write to the court, or the colonel of the regiment where he was captain. Pen and ink were refuſed, his pockets ſearched,

every thing of value ſeized. Papers he had none. This confinement might, it is probable, have endured ſome months, but a lady came to the inn, where, for the preſent, he was confined: the hoſteſs told the hiſtory, in which the lady found ſomething was wrong; being a woman of ſpirit, ſhe inſiſted upon ſeeing the priſoner; and, as ſhe was of high rank, the magiſtrates durſt not refuſe her; ſhe, upon entering the room, ſaw the gentleman was her countryman: indeed his figure is ſo truly French, and of what I have heard ſome dying Engliſh ſoldiers, at Fontenoy reproached their adverſaries, Soupe maigre. I do not conceive it poſſible to be otherwiſe than a pique, and not a miſtake. The lady commanded pen, ink, and paper, in conſequence of his letter, which the lady

preſented

preſented; orders came from the court, that the gentleman ſhould demand whatever reparations he judged requiſite. Though he had ſuffered in many points, having loſt ſeveral things of value, beſides the inconveniency of imprisonment; yet, to ſhew he was not actuated by a ſpirit of meer revenge, or intereſt, he aſked nothing for himſelf, but releaſe and reparations to ſome poor Proteſtants, whom this magiſtrate had moſt cruelly oppreſt. The gentleman is now retired from the ſervice, with the Croix de St. Louis. I know him very well, and believe he is a man of honor and truth; and thoſe who are not, are ſeldom falſe to the diſhonor of their country, or countrymen. The king has, within a few years, made a very good order, with regard to theſe magiſtrates, who before were perſons of ſo

low a rank, they could not be expected to be guided by any other motive than intereſt. In anſwer to your queſtion, how I like the ladies? I will tell you; here are ſome in this kingdom very pretty and agreeable; but the Pariſians are not eſteemed, by perſons of their own nation, handſome or well made. The defect, in general, of French faces, is a ſameneſs; the variety of character, ſo ſtriking in Engliſh beauties, is unknown here. Un air hardi, derived from much pains, and an idea that modeſty and timidity beſpeak a perſon of mean birth, gives ſuch a general reſemblance, if you go to an aſſembly, where there are two hundred women, every one appears of the ſame family. They are all lively, or affect that air, which is eſteemed ſo requiſite to beauty; I have heard a woman laugh, when

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I have ſeen her cry. Nature, no doubt, gives to the French as great variety of character as other nations; but the part of good breeding, ſtiled, preſenting well, is begun when they are infants, and purſued with ſuch aſſiduity, a child's countenance, at ſix years old, is as formed, and can make as many grimaces (for politeneſs and affability can be eſteemed no better at that age) as the moſt excellent in this art at thirty in England. I have heard a boy, before he had the habit of a man, tell every woman in the room ſhe was belle comme l'amour. A lad of faſhion complaining, the manner of wearing his hair was inſupportable, I adviſed him to wear it ſhort. Ah! monſieur, ſaid he, Je ſerois bien aiſe de le faire, mais on diroit que je n'avois ne ſentiment ni honneur, ſi a mon age je ne

mettois pas de Pappillotes.—This ſentimental perſon was fifteen ; had never been out of his mother's or nurſe's houſe, nor had any education, except a little bad Latin, which he catched as he could from an old abbot (his tutor in partibus) when the weather was bad ; for when it was fine, he declared he did not love ſtudy. I am far from repreſenting this as a general plan of French education ; neither have I any reaſon to think it very ſingular : his mother was eſteemed a woman d'eſprit, et beaucoup de ſcavoir vivre. In an hotel where I once lodged, obſerving a perſon who appeared ſo low as a ſharper, I was afraid he ſhould rob me. Upon informing myſelf, he proved the tutor and governor of a fine young man of quality and fortune ; he had a penſion of two hundred livres : I am certain the valet de

chambre,

chambre, by his appearance, had a better appointment. I have heard a gentleman, who is very partial to his country, avow, many a man would give fifty louis a year to a book, who would not make this expence in the education of his children. You have read frequent exclamations againſt the Engliſh, by our writers, with regard to luxury, and want of domeſtic attention; but, thank God, ſuch unnatural and abſurd ſentiments, as related above, are unknown in England: a ſmall reſidence in this country, paſt in the examination of manners, will convince how much, in general, we ſpend our money better than our neighbours. Now I am upon the ſubject of education, I will ſpeak a few words upon that of girls, who are of the common rank of nobleſſe. They are ſent to a convent,

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in a provincial town; where, for a ſmall penſion, they are kept alive, rather than fed. The learning is, ſome religion, and much ſuperſtition, working, and ſcreaming to muſic; inſtrumental being more expenſive, is not ſo general. The principal inſtruction of theſe young ladies is, to read, and hear read the lives of the ſaints; upon which, in ſome convents, they declame; thoſe who can determine with the greateſt preciſion, whether St. Catherine, or St. Bridget, &c. had the greateſt merit, gain the palm.—This brings to my remembrance an examination which paſſed before the great and celebrated pope Lambertini; the future biſhop was aſked, as a knotty point of divinity, whether the Franciſcans, or Benedictines, or ſome other order, no matter whoſe, was the moſt ancient? The

exami-

examiners were going on in this ſtyle, when the pope interrupted them, with an ironical air, ſaying, thoſe were points of too much conſequence to be decided in haſte; therefore deſired they might be left to the generals of their reſpective orders, who could write more volumes upon the ſubject than he had hours to ſpare. As I know you are an enemy to flattery, and as I am the ſame, I will not ſuppoſe your time equally precious with that celebrated pontiff's; conſequently ſhall make no apology for having ſpoke on ſubjects which appear ſo trivial. I am happy when I can write any thing that deſerves your attention: though permit me to ſay, I receive more pleaſure from the idea of your partiality, than I could from the greateſt advantages, or even ſuperiority of talents, in the poſſeſſion of which,

which, my higheſt happineſs would be to convince how ſincerely I am,

Madam,

*Paris.*

Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XVII.

I HAVE been at Verſailles, a place ſo well known it is ſcarce poſſible to ſay any thing new; for that reaſon I ſhall not dwell upon the ſubject. The facade of the palace to the town, has rather the appearance of a heap of buildings, than the front of one large edifice; that to the gardens is very handſome: the apartments are extremely ſpacious and noble. I was ſorry I had not time to examine the paintings,

ings ſo much as I wiſhed. The king paſſing to hear maſs, I was led by my company to make his ſuite. This ceremony is more pleaſing at Verſailles, than any other place where I have attended; as the ſervice is ſhort, and the muſic, ſung by an Italian, very fine: at other churches or chapels, they have only muſic at the grand maſs, which is too long for thoſe who have no other motive than curioſity. Whenever I am preſent at this ceremony, it is with regret I obſerve an appearance of ſuch confined ſentiments in Chriſtians, and, in oppoſition to them, reflect upon thoſe ſublime ideas, which Lucan gives to Cato: Ideas perfectly agreeable to Chriſtianity.

Eſtque Dei ſedes, ubi terra, et pontus et aër
Et cœlum, et virtus ——————

Where earth, ſea, air, or heaven is,
God reigns; and virtue is his throne.

It is certain many perſons, of ſuperior underſtanding and ſentiments, who are Catholics by profeſſion, do not believe every point taught by the church of Rome. A lady accuſing a gentleman of my acquaintance of not being a good Catholic; he replied, It is true, madam, there may be many better in this city; but I ſhould be ſorry if this nation, or any other, could boaſt a more honeſt man: That he was what he indirectly aſſerted, in the unlimited ſenſe of the words, was ſo notorious, the pride of the ſpeech was loſt in its veracity. The chapel of Verſailles is very fine and pretty; but this is by no means the juſt praiſe of a building dedicated to the divinity which ought to be in a more ſolemn and ſublime ſtyle. The celebrated gardens did not anſwer my expectations, my ideas were raiſed too high: it is common to hear of

ſcenes more beautiful than the imagination, but they exiſt not in the works of art. A lively imagination paints ſtronger, and finer, than any human power can execute; he alone who formed that faculty, can ſurpaſs it. Here are ſome good ſtatues, and the principal waterworks are worth ſeeing: thoſe in the labyrinth are ſo trifling, I ſhould not have given them a moment's attention, but for the pleaſure of obſerving a child of four years old explain the figures which were perfectly adapted to his age and underſtanding. Theſe gardens, though large, appear contracted, as their ſituation does not permit a view beyond them. In general, the Engliſh much ſurpaſs the French in this point. A genius for the great and natural, which is diſtinguiſhable in many of our writers, is never more requiſite than when

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we are forming rural ſcenes; as in thoſe art ſhould hide her head, and nature alone appear: correctneſs and exactitude, the great merit of the French authors, has nothing to do here. There is another reaſon why the Engliſh ſhould ſurpaſs this nation in theſe undertakings; the former often delight in a country life; reading and meditation are the voluntary occupations of my countrymen, ſcarce ever of the French; the ſmalleſt bourg is to them preferable to the fineſt ſeat. I have been told, many of the monks de Chartreux, whoſe powers of ſpeech are limited, turn mad; it is generally imputed to this cauſe: but as the ſame misfortune happens in convents of women, the moſt probable reaſon is the general diſagreeableneſs of the ſituation. How far the latter are from keep-

keeping ſilence every one knows who has viſited thoſe houſes, and from their general reputation on that head. Greſſet, with great humor, repreſents the ſoul of a parrot tranſmigrated into a nun. Whatever is the cauſe, madneſs, in every ſituation of life, is more common than in England; which is very aſtoniſhing, when one conſiders how weak their ſentiments are of every kind; but very accountable from the ſtrength of their paſſions, which, for want of reflection, knows no bounds; the word ſentiment is ever in their mouth, but never in their hearts, or, if it is, miſapplied. It is unneceſſary to obſerve here, as in many other places, I ſpeak in general terms. I will, in my next, give a relation where, though you will ſee much paſſion (and of a kind not very common in France) yet I think

you will allow ſome ſentiment. I am happy to ſay, I ſhould be more ſo to demonſtrate, the regard with which I am,

Madam,

Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XVIII.

THE following anecdote I had from a gentleman of veracity, as a fact, that paſſed not many years ſince. A man of quality obſerving his wife agreeable to a certain great perſonage, and apprehending ſhe might have the ſame loyal ſentiments as a lady with whom I converſed the other day, Nos corps, et nos biens ſont au roi, in which ſhe would have had a conſiderable majority

jority on her ſide ; but her huſband being ſtrongly in the minority, went into her apartment one morning, and declared his ſentiments in the following terms, with two piſtols in his hands : Madam, I have too high a regard for your and my honor, and too fond an attachment to your perſon, to yield either to any power on earth. If you will not agree to take the proper ſteps to ſecure them, this piſtol ſhall : As I neither expect to eſcape, nor wiſh to ſurvive ſuch an action, and the loſs of you a moment, here is another for myſelf.—The tragedy did not end very deeply : the lady ſeeing her huſband in earneſt, immediately went with him into the country, and was never enquired after by her royal lover ; who always prefers thoſe who court, to them that fly.——I went yeſterday to the

Bois de Boulogne, which is particularly agreeable from its vicinity to Paris, as that ſituation renders one perfectly ſenſible to all its rural charms. The Chateau de Madrid pleaſes from novelty; it was built by Francis the firſt, to imitate as well by the interior diſpoſition of the apartments, as by the architecture and outward ornaments, the Chateau de Madrid, where he was kept priſoner by Charles the fifth; how he came there you are ſo good an hiſtorian, it is not neceſſary for me to relate. What could induce the monarch to erect a palace in commemoration of ſuch a diſagreeable event, I will not pretend to determine. It is ſaid the imitation is exact as his wiſhes, even to the little guard-room. The proſpect from the Chateau is very fine. It is now in poſſeſſion of the preſident de Pelletier.

There

There is nothing worthy remark but ſome good pictures of perſons of diſtinction in the robe, many of them relations of the preſident, and a piece of the famous Duke de Sully; the high merit and reputation of the original gives great worth to every repreſentation. Near the Bois de Boulogne, is the village of Paſſy, the moſt pleaſant in France. The gardens, where are the medicinal waters, command a charming proſpect of the Seine, Paris, and the environs. I have made ſeveral excurſions; but if I find ſome pleaſure in ſeeing a number of palaces, I am apprehenſive there is too much ſameneſs for you to receive any from the deſcription; for this reaſon I will only ſay of St. Cloud, it is, in my opinion, preferable to Verſailles; as I think ſituation more conſequential than magnifi-

cence. Louis Quatorze liked this palace too well; he told his brother, he wiſhed to be his Concierge; a hint the Duke of Orleans did not chuſe to take. It is amazing, amidſt ſo many fine ſituations, what could induce that monarch to fix upon one ſo bad as Verſailles to diſplay his magnificence; ſome ſay it was to render the power of the latter more conſpicuous. The ſame expence at St. Germains would have made that place one of the fineſt in the world. I have heard, the view of St. Denis from thence deterred the king from building, and improving St. Germains. He could take no pleaſure in a proſpect of which his Memento mori made a part. This may not be the true reaſon, but appears poſſible to thoſe who are well acquainted with the French. Their fears and apprehenſions

prehenſions of death are moſt exceſſive. An elderly lady invited me, with many others, to her tête, which they celebrate on the day of the patron ſaint; from whom they take their name as we do a birth-day: I wiſhed that lady numerous and happy years; ſhe made no anſwer, a cloud came over her face, of which I did not comprehend the reaſon; but was afterwards told, my wiſh implied a poſſibility of the contrary, and had by that means ſhocked her. I have known perſons who appeared to believe all the legends ſuperſtition can teach; yet, upon a ſtrict converſation, they did not diſcover the leaſt reaſonable hope or faith of an immortal life. A ſentiment which Fielding gives to Sophia's maid in raillery, I have heard many French ſeriouſly avow, particularly the ladies. It is better to kill all

the world than one's ſelf: they gave this as a Catholic principle, and argued, penitence was left for the one, and not the other. It is certain we have no right to diſpoſe of our own lives; but, if poſſible, I think we have leſs to diſpoſe of another perſon's. It is not only in this, but many other points, they chuſe to depend upon penance and abſolution; I ſuppoſe, as being much eaſier than conſtant and uniform virtue. I propoſe to quit this place to-morrow, which I ſhall do without the leaſt regret; as every remove, though it apparently carries me from you, will haſten our meeting. Indeed your abſence makes a void in life, which all the pleaſures, beauties, and agreement, to be found in this world, cannot fill up. So reaſonable a happineſs, and ſo high a ſatisfaction, as

that

that of paſſing my time with her I love, can never find an equivalent. In theſe ſentiments, I am, with the greateſt eſteem,

Madam,

Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XIX.

I HAVE been about ten days at Blois: the inhabitants appear a very ſociable, agreeable people, extremely civil to ſtrangers; particularly Madame de Baillehache, one of the firſt perſons, (though here is much ancient nobleſſe); being Engliſh is the higheſt introduction to her ſociety. A great number of Canadians live in this city; I am

acquainted

acquainted with none except the ladies of the Vaſſant family; who are very ſenſible agreeable women, of a good houſe in Bretagne. Blois is celebrated for ſpeaking the beſt French in the kingdom: ſome aſſert this reputation was acquired from the reſidence of the court; conſequently has no longer a right to that ſuperiority. If people mean by the beſt French, the beſt accent, not only Blois, but all the country d'alentour, has the ſame merit. If the richneſs of the language is to be taken into the excellence, I ſhould think Univerſity or Parliament towns, being ſeats of eloquence, have more juſt pretenſions. I know ſome of the latter, particularly Roûen, have a bad accent; but it does not affect the rank of people whom ſtrangers frequent. Thoſe who compoſe the beſt ſocieties,

as

as the houſe robe, principal clergy, &c. are educated in Paris, the latter at the Sorbonne. Hear the one ſpeak, and the other preach, I defy the niceſt ear to diſcover the Rouennois in their elegant diſcourſes: what I know of this, I imagine of the other ſeats of parliament, particularly of Bretagne; where, from the ſpirit of eloquence which dictated their remonſtrances, may be ſeen how highly they poſſeſs their language; and wherever the robe are diſtinguiſhed, the ſame degree of excellence may be expected from the clergy, talents increaſing by emulation. It is true, the liberty of parliaments, and the abſolute power of the Roman church, are ſubjects which form a contraſt; accordingly the parties are always at variance; but graceful elocution, and juſt diction, are

equally

equally employed by both to carry their points.—I have heard an anecdote which at firſt ſurprized me much; but upon reflection, a part of my aſtoniſhment ceaſed; it is, that Madame de Sevigné hated her daughter, to whom ſhe wrote ſo many volumes of letters, full of the moſt tender affection. I can conceive, a woman may want natural affection, a child may not merit it, and decency may oblige people to a certain appearance: but that it is poſſible to expreſs ſo much love where there is ſo little, I could never have believed, had not thoſe expreſſions been outrées: they appeared to me ridiculous before I heard this anecdote, and now contemptible. The ſentiments and expreſſions of nature, may equal or ſurpaſs in force thoſe of the paſſions, but never can have the ridicule which ſometimes attends

tends the latter; and ſure, for a mother to compliment a daughter on her beauty, has ſo great a degree of folly, if ſhe is not a fool (as Madame de Sevigné certainly was not) it muſt proceed from ſome extraordinary motive; though diſlike to a daughter, at leaſt, if one may judge from the ill treatment of them, can ſcarce be called ſo here. Of the numbers of girls who are forced into convents, there are many more from the cruelty of mothers than fathers. If Madame de Sevigné had the underſtanding ſome people give her, ſhe was not only a general contradiction to the world in general, but a particular one to the French with whom I am acquainted; who are artful in the ſame degree they are weak, and wiſe as they are ſincere. It is unneceſſary to ſay this obſervation regards only common

mon life; in politics I am not converſant; there I ſuppoſe all may deſcend to art. If this anecdote is falſe, it comes from the French; who are, in general, intereſted in the reputation of their writers; and one would hope envy nor ſcandal could not live ſo long after the perſon it regards is dead. But in contraſt to this defect in family affection, which I cannot myſelf affirm, I will give the hiſtory of a domeſtic heroine (though in another kind) the truth of which I can aver. An officer, who had ſerved ſeveral years with diſtinction and reputation, ſent to deſire his wife to join him at Breſt, to go to the Weſt Indies, where his regiment was commanded; ſhe immediately complied, though in a ſituation which rendered ſuch a voyage dangerous. Imagine then her diſtreſs, when arriving at

Breſt, ſhe found her huſband confined by a pique of his Colonel, and diſhonored, by being caſhiered without the uſual reward of long ſervice, the Croix de St. Louis; the penſion annexed is inconſiderable, but though the order is common, the high point of honor attached to it, is beyond the conception of an Engliſhman, at leaſt, a wiſe one, who reſts his reputation upon ſomething more ſolid than the court can give, or the pique of a courtier prevent. The lady conſulted the officers whom juſtice intereſted in the honor of her huſband: they adviſed, if poſſible, to get to Verſailles before the Colonel, who had that day ſet out to have his proceedings ratified; after which they are ſeldom changed or corrected. Finding no chaiſe, the lady took poſt horſes, and purſued her jour-

ney

ney with ſuch ſpirit, night and day, ſhe preſented her petition to the Dauphineſs; it was granted, and ſhe met the Colonel entering the palace of Verſailles as ſhe quitted it. I had the pleaſure of dining with this happy couple when the above-written event was related. It is impoſſible to expreſs the ſatisfaction and pleaſure which appeared in the gentleman's countenance, nor his fondneſs for a wife and only child, whoſe lives had been riſqued for the ſole cauſe on earth that could be put in competition with them: they have little more than a hundred a year: love formed their union. I could not but remark ſuch a ſingular inſtance of conjugal affection, in a nation where a moderate degree of this virtue is rare. You will not wonder it is ſo, when I tell the manner in which marriages, in general,

are contracted. The gentleman pays a viſit to the lady, who is at the other ſide of the grate; in that ſituation every man is charming: it ſaves the exertion of paternal authority, and the aſſiduity of a lover. The conſequences of theſe unions are what might be expected; the lady eſcaped from her confinement, places her happineſs in repairing loſt time, by living in public; and her huſband, whom ſhe could not be ſaid to chuſe, ſhe ſeldom approves. Compliments, which have only their juſt value with thoſe who have lived and been educated in the world, turn the brain, and make the bliſs of a perſon to whom they are entirely new. The honor of a deliberate diſtinction is, I flatter myſelf, that of, Madam,

*Blois.* Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XX.

ON the road from Blois to Orleans, is the charming ſeat of Madame de Pompadour's brother, now Monſ. de Menard, from the name of this Chateau. The faſhion of taking the title of an eſtate, which the French do, whether it comes by inheritance or purchaſe, makes them change their appellations three or four times in their lives. This cuſtom confuſed me extremely when I firſt came into France; for I imagined every perſon of the family whoſe name was their diſtinction. Seeing a Mademoiſelle de Courtenay, I concluded ſhe was of that houſe, one of the firſt in France; but I found ſhe was only called ſo from a little piece of ground,

ground, to avoid being diſtinguiſhed by her Chriſtian name; which none, who are or would be eſteemed perſons of faſhion, will permit. The great, from their different eſtates, are eaſily ſupplied with diſtinctions; but I have known thoſe who were poor, and of inferior rank, and yet would ape them; obliged to a gooſeberry-buſh, or a cherry-tree, for their title. Orleans is a large town, but very little good company. The cathedral is very handſome, to which conſiderable additions are making, a great ſum being appropriated to that uſe. The bridge lately built is very fine, but not equal to Weſtminſter. The French are very fond of a Bon mot ſaid with regard to this edifice. A perſon finding it, as he thought, very defective in point of ſtrength, and declaring his opinion, was anſwered, Cela

n'eſt pas vrai, car il a ſoutena le plus grand poids de la France, Madame de Pompadour eſt paſſeé parla hier. The Rue Royale, which leads to the bridge, is very handſome: the fronts of the houſes are built by the king, any perſon may buy one, and finiſh the remainder of the dwelling to his taſte. This uniformity has a beautiful effect, the facades being compleat to the bridge, which leading to the planted road makes the point of view perfectly fine. In the chapel of the Benedictins, there are what the people call paintings, but they really do not deſerve that title. The tapeſtry has much better pretenſions from the appearance; one muſt go very near to be undeceived. The Benedictins are eſteemed an order who have ſome learning, particularly in hiſtory; but a Monkiſh hiſtory is generally too partial

partial to be very valuable. However, nothing can be ſaid againſt this order in particular, except their poſſeſſing great riches, which might be employed to better purpoſes. It is certainly very unjuſt, perſons who are a dead weight upon the public, ſhould have more wealth than they can find means to ſpend; when an officer, who has ventured his life for the ſervice of his king and country, as well as ſpent the little fortune he received from his family, has only four hundred livres a year, about ſeventeen or eighteen pounds ſterling: I know ſome who have but this penſion for their ſupport, and perſons of very good family.——I was ſo unlucky, when at Paris, I did not ſee one comedy of Moliere's; for that reaſon I condeſcended to attend the Miſanthrope at this place; the com-

pany was in general good, but the principal actor by no means equal to his part. I have ſeen this play at the Duke de Noailles, when the Duke d'Ayen, Madame de Teſſay, and Madame de Noailles repreſented the firſt characters. Madame de Teſſay played the coquet with equal ſpirit and elegance; Madame de Noailles the prude, with as great juſtneſs; and their fine figures infinitely heightened the merit of their performance. But I cannot ſay the Duke ſucceeded ſo well in the character of this piece, as I have heard he does in many others; nor is it aſtoniſhing a Miſanthrope ſhould not be found, whoſe politeneſs, hoſpitality and gaiety reign.——Though the repreſentations may not be in ſo high perfection as many others, yet I never ſee this play without admiration, and read it with

yet

yet greater. The ſenſe is ſo fine and ſtrong, one wiſhes to dwell longer upon each word than acting will permit. We have no comedy of equal force in my opinion: indeed, for the number and exquiſite humor of his works, he bears the palm from every comic writer. In tragedy, I think, the ſuperiority is indiſputably the right of the Engliſh; though the French are far from acknowledging this point: but I can never agree they are judges of what it is ſcarce poſſible they ſhould underſtand. Hearing a gentleman criticiſe and murder Shakeſpear, I expreſſed my ſentiments as far as politeneſs would permit: He ſaid, Why might not he comprehend Shakeſpear, as well as the Engliſh Racine? the anſwer was a demonſtration he had no idea of our great poet; who is not perfectly underſtood

by perſons of his own nation, who will not ſtudy him; nor by all that do, is plain from ſome of his commentators. Shakeſpear's language, and the variety of characters, which are many of them Engliſh; add to theſe in his comedies, the humor are all inſuperable difficulties to a ſtranger. As to Racine, his ſtyle is eaſy, and his characters being ancient, foreign, and, in general, tragic, are as well known to us as the French: They generally prefer Racine to Corneille; in which, as in many points, I differ from them. Some French company, with whom I made an engagement, when at Paris, to travel into the South, are arrived: This obliges me to conclude ſooner than I intended. I am, Madam,

*Orleans.* Your moſt obedient, &c.

LET-

## LETTER XXI.

THE connections of my party obliging them to take the route de Bourbonnois for Lyons, I could not do otherwiſe; though I am informed that of La Bourgogne is more eligible. In conſequence of this deciſion we went to Briare: from Orleans to Chateauneuf nothing appears worthy attention. The Count de St. Florentin is Seigneur of this place; he has a houſe and gardens in a ſituation very uncommon for a miniſter's: they are falling into ruins. From the Count's ſeat, which is not worth ſeeing, we went to the church, where we had better ſucceſs. There is a fine monument of Monſ. de Louvois, prime miniſter to Louis Quartorze; it

is a Roman performance: nothing can be more noble than the figure of Monſ. de Louvois, in which conſiſts the beauty of the whole, the ornaments not being conſiderable. The French, tho' it was early, choſe to dine at Chateauneuf, as this place is celebrated for good eating. I had always heard, and did believe, for ſome time, ſociety made the principal part in the pleaſures of a table in France; but a reſidence in this country has convinced me of the contrary: when they can indulge in feaſting, without taking from the expence of their figure in other points, they do; and when abſtemious, it is from love of parade. It is an odd aſſertion, but I think faſting makes gluttons: Devots and Devotees, are in general ſo. Drinking is certainly much leſs common than in England; but, upon the whole,

whole, the virtue of temperance is as much ours as theirs. I know a Frenchman who eat two dozen of ortolans for forty livres, a pint of bad wine for ten ſols: An Engliſhman, perhaps, would have reverſed the expence. From what I have ſaid on this ſubject, as well as on ſome others more eſſential, you will, it is poſſible, accuſe me of partiality to my country: I promiſe, it ſhall not make me deviate from truth; and for the reſt, a man cannot have too much for that nation to whoſe preſervation and proſperity he ought to be ready to ſacrifice his life and fortune.——I arrived at Briare after paſſing a very barren country: in this place we had nothing to examine but the canal, which, though a very valuable and curious work, would not be entertaining in the deſcription. The province

of

of Berry, through which we paſſed to the Nivernois, is a very plentiful country, but the people very poor; the latter and the former, in ſome degree, proceeds from the difficulty of tranſporting the produce of this into other provinces. The gentry are much diſtreſſed; but the moſt ſhocking ſight I ever ſaw in this reſpect, was a gentleman travelling in la Beauce, walking with his wife, who was barefooted: he had, as they called it, deroged, by marrying his ſervant; yet, as by his figure no ſuperiority appeared, except that derived from his ſword, ſhoes and ſtockings, in which he could not make her his equal, I do not ſee there was any great harm done; for I imagine they were upon a par as to ſentiments, the moſt eſſential point in ſuch an union; he having been born to this exceſs of

poverty

poverty it was not poſſible he could have received a common French education; as long as a family can be brought up with any degree of decency and knowledge, a man does right to keep the advantages of nobleſſe; a moderate fortune gained in trade, being far from compenſating what may be loſt in rendering ſons incapable of the many lucrative honors attached to high birth, and daughters of great alliances. I am acquainted with a man of quality and vaſt fortune, who, going to make a reſidence at an eſtate he had never ſeen, called upon an old friend of his father's; when entering the court, he was ſo highly ſtruck and charmed with the beauty of a young woman who was waſhing, that, in a moment, he was deſperately in love; as he approached, ſhe ran away: this circumſtance, and a know-

a knowledge of the gentleman's poverty, made him hope it was the daughter of a friend; he was not miſtaken, and married her without the leaſt heſitation, which he would not have done the greateſt fortune who had not the ſame birth: As for education, it was probably better than if her parents had been more at their eaſe; for, in general, amongſt the women I have known, thoſe are moſt agreeable who have been educated at home. A gentleman, the eldeſt of ten children, told me, they entered the world with no other advantage than a good name. They are all very conſiderable at preſent. I do not ſay theſe events are frequent, but enough ſo to prove we ſhould not wonder (as I have heard ſome Engliſh) and blame the French nobleſſe, becauſe they do not engage in trade upon the leaſt

leaſt glimpſe of poverty. What is right, and perhaps requiſite in one ſyſtem of government, may be wrong in another. It is moſt certain, before they arrive at the degree of miſery with the poor gentleman I firſt mentioned, they would do well to quit that ſtate from which they can receive no advantage; not being in a ſituation to aſſociate with their ſuperiors, they have no chance of raiſing their fortune. What is a much greater inconvenience to the nation than the nobleſſe not entering into commerce, thoſe who are in that ſituation will not continue a moment after they can live idle. A Bourgeois being a ſtep above a Merchant, by this means buſineſs is never well underſtood, nor carried on with any advantage. Many Engliſh have an idea none but gentlemen are admitted into the army; yet not only

the marching regiments, but in the gardes de corps, during the late war, ſome others were admitted; the court was glad to receive any rank that could bear the expence, the pay not being anſwerable to the figure required; and thoſe who have honor already, will not purchaſe an addition at ſo dear a rate, as others an entire acquiſition. The ſervice has every advantage but riches; even the loweſt ſoldier finds a ſuperior protection from the court; of which, the following circumſtances are a proof. A Proteſtant ſoldier died; the commanding officer ordered him to be buried; the prieſt refuſed to do his duty; a guard was ſet about the grave, the man put into it, and the prieſt commanded to let him reſt till an anſwer came from court: the order arrived, in theſe words, ſaid to be the King's:

"I

"I know but one religion in my king-
"dom, and my ſoldier ſhall be honor-
"ably and decently interred." It is unneceſſary to obſerve the clergy ſubmitted. Whether this was his Majeſty's deciſion or not, I have heard ſome which certainly were; and inclined me to think, had as much pains been taken to make him wiſe and virtuous as the contrary, he would not have been very deficient in any reſpect. I am afraid I write on many ſubjects not amuſing; but you commanded my ſentiments as they aroſe, and they muſt depend upon the ſociety with whom I am connected, and the circumſtances before me; unleſs you would have the whole letter to conſiſt of my principal idea, the eſteem with which I am,

Madam,

*La Charité.* Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XXII.

NIVERS, the capital of Nivernois, has a very handſome entrance, by a fine gate; as have moſt cities in France: In which reſpect this, and many others, may be compared to the mountain and the mouſe; for, except a fine view from the bridge, every part of the town is bad. The architect has particularly diſplayed the ſociable diſpoſition of his country; for you may give hands, and embrace from the oppoſite windows. All the remark I can make upon the cathedral is, the images are ſo numerous, and placed in ſuch a ſtyle about the choir, the inhabitants may from thence acquire a reputation of perpetual devotion: I ſtarted back

back at firſt ſight, not being willing to interrupt ſo ſerious an occupation in others, to ſatisfy my curioſity. Nivernois is a fine province, as is the Bourbonnois; the capital of the latter is Moulins, a tolerable well-built town. The Cour de Berci is eſteemed the fineſt in France; it is very large, and beautifully planted; but I think the Cour at Rouen more pleaſing, as there is a greater variety in the view. In the convent of St. Mary is a ſuperb monument of the laſt Duke of Montmorenci, who was beheaded at Thouloufe in the reign of Louis Treize. When at a diſtance from the capital, nothing eſcapes that merits attention. Thoſe I have mentioned are the only objects which deſerve to interrupt a journey for a moment.——The little barren province du Foreſt ſeems placed

by nature to give a higher relief to the beautiful country of the Beaujolois and Lyonnois; they cannot be ſurpaſſed: The hills covered with vines and olives, the vallies with the richeſt paſture; and in the Corſitain, the lofty mountains of Auvergne form a ſcene to which my pen is by no means adequate. Theſe pleaſing proſpects, added to a ſociety well compoſed, have rendered my journey very agreeable. The French are, in general, good travelling companions; ſoon acquainted, and have a knowledge uſeful for the occaſion; hiſtories of families, provinces, &c. They have one ſubject, with which I am more than ſatisfied; this is the King's amours. The French are ſo dazzled with royalty, every action of a King appears intereſting. As for Madame de Pompadour, ſhe made herſelf conſequential;

ſequential; but, in general, no more is to be ſaid of one woman the King loves than of another. I have related one affair as it was attended with particular circumſtances, the ſame reaſon engages me in the following. Perhaps it may be neceſſary to premiſe, though (to the honor of the court) lettres de cachets are not ſo eaſily obtained as they were ſometime ſince; yet, at preſent, by them perſons may be confined, without trial, not only on miniſterial affairs, but by their relations, and are ſo on various ſubjects and pretences. A lady had ſhut up her father in one of theſe Maiſons de Force; ſometime after the King happened to take a fancy to her: A perſon, who did not chooſe ſhe ſhould have ſo high a rank as the King's maitreſſe en titre is here eſteemed, told him of the above-mentioned affair, which

had the desired effect; his Majesty never afterwards treating her with any distinction. Odd enough, that virtue of any kind should be requisite for such a situation. Perhaps a more effectual method could not be taken to encourage filial piety; of which, and every family sentiment, France appears to have less than England; but the royal house is, in general, distinguished for this merit. The King was many years a very attached and fond husband. What must be the strength and blindness of that passion which made him say, whenever a handsome woman was mentioned, Is she as handsome as my Queen? who is, without exception, the plainest person in Europe. This sentiment continued so long, it would probably have been as lasting as life, had not the Queen's mistaken devotions

rendered

rendered her incapable of entertaining him; his Majeſty muſt be entertained, and does not diſlike being governed. The Queen had as little inclination for government as the King; ſhe threw herſelf into the hands of the prieſts; he fell into thoſe of a miſtreſs. You will, perhaps, think I have wandered from the ſubject of the King's amours; pardon me, however unuſual a circumſtance it may be in this kingdom, there is reaſon to think he never loved any woman but his Wife; though, by the aſſiduity of others, he is connected with them, as the Queen preferred her devotions to his Majeſty's ſociety. Coffee is her paſſion, though ſhe likes the pleaſures of the table in general; having once, as a penance, ceaſed to drink that liquor, ſhe was ſo miſerable, as to be obliged to deſiſt from a ſcheme

which appeared to her very meritorious. After what I have ſaid, it is unneceſſary to add, ſhe is a very weak woman; yet ſhe has many great qualities: Compaſſionate, affable, charitable, and generous. Virtues that are inconteſtable. To which ſhe adds, in the higheſt perfection, all thoſe whoſe exiſtence is derived from the religion ſhe profeſſes. You will not be ſorry the poſt is going out, and obliges me to conclude,

Madam,

*Lyons.*

Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XXIV.

THE ſituation of Lyons is extremely beautiful and advantageous. The rivers

rivers Soane and Rhone are great ornaments, and contribute to render it the moſt rich and commercial city in France. This place ſupplies with manufactures not only the whole kingdom, but Italy and Spain; the latter have their dreſſes, as well as ſilks, made here. The place de Bel cour ſurpaſſes, in many reſpects, any in Paris, except that of Louis Quinze: this place has a beautiful ſhady walk, and though in the midſt of the town, has a view into the country: The hills, covered with the rich fruits of this province, riſing into an amphitheatre above the tops of the houſes, have a moſt pleaſing effect. The quay is very handſome, the ramparts are an agreeable walk, and command a fine proſpect. You ſee the ſituation of the town is charming; but I ſhould never chooſe a

long

long reſidence in Lyons, the ſociety being far from deſirable. The inhabitants are almoſt all des gens parvenus; very little true nobleſſe. It is very eaſy, when riches are acquired, to purchaſe offices which give the rank of gentlemen; but the ſentiments by which they are diſtinguiſhed, are beyond all price. Honor and politeneſs are the general attendants on high birth; how far others may be inferior to thoſe who have this advantage in the firſt of theſe qualities, my acquaintance with the gentilhomme Bourgeois, is too ſlight to determine with juſtice; but a day is ſufficient to ſee in the latter they bear no compariſon.——This city has a good theatre, concerts, &c. The women have very little beauty, but endeavour to ſupply that defect by dreſs, which, in general, ſucceeds with

French-

Frenchmen; une belle femme, et une femme bien miſe, being almoſt ſynonymous terms. The Duke de Villeroi is governor of this town, but ſeldom reſident. The intendant and commandant receive company. The commanderie is joined to the prevôt des marchands; conſequently the commandants are of a rank inferior to thoſe in other cities. A gentleman of my acquaintance obſerving a perſon in that office, who had but an indifferent appearance, aſked if he was of condition. The perſon he addreſſed, anſwered, Il eſt un gentilhomme comme cela. I think none ſhould be deſpiſed for their birth, but thoſe who are inſolent from their riches; a defect very general in all the French who acquire fortunes by commerce: In England, the ſucceſs being more common, is ſupported with a better

grace. The inhabitants of Lyons are not ſo ignorant as in ſome parts of France; they would not be ſurpriſed to hear the children in Rome ſpeak Italian, as was one of their countrymen, who being anſwered, Do not children in France ſpeak French? ſaid, Perdie, parle Francois, tout le monde parle Francois. The great commerce of this city obliges the Lyonnois to be connected, and ſometimes to travel into foreign countries; which gives a great ſuperiority to many provincial towns, and, being the route to Italy, brings many ſtrangers. At a ſupper where I was preſent, added to ſeveral very intelligent perſons of this place, there were two Italians of high faſhion and agreeable ſociety. The perſons one meets abroad are generally ſuperior to thoſe at home; as it is that ſuperiority which gives an

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inclination for farther knowledge. It is only the Engliſh, who frequently viſit foreign nations without any other motive than faſhion. The upper rank of people in Lyons, keep very great and elegant tables, ſurpaſſing any I have yet ſeen in a provincial town. Wine and all proviſions, are in equal abundance and perfection. One circumſtance, in the manner of living in this city, is very low and mean: Perſons of great fortune let out different parts of the houſes they inhabit: I am in that of a gentleman who makes a conſiderable figure; here are three or four families, beſides the perſon of whom I hire my part. A French gentleman, who thinks he underſtands Engliſh, and the cuſtoms of the nation, ſhewed me a lady at the play, and pointing to her with great deriſion, ſaid

ſhe

ſhe was quite a toaſt; what he underſtood by that word, I cannot better explain to you than in ſaying, it regarded her character (not her perſon); which was the reverſe of hers, to whom I have the honor of being

*Lyons.* A moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XXV.

I WAS paying a viſit to an Engliſh lady yeſterday, when an event happened, which made me laugh at the time; though it has ſince given riſe to ſome ſerious reflections.——A young bold girl came into the room, who announced herſelf in the following terms, beginning with the uſual compliment to my countrywoman: J'entend que madame

madame eſt Angloiſe, et en conſequence de cela qu'elle aime et recompenſe les ſciences, et beaux arts ; je ſuis fille de famille, j'ai reçu une très belle education ; dès mon enfance j'ai appris à coëffer les dames et faire les colifichets ; mais comme je crains de n'avoir pas aſſez du gout et de ſentiment pour coëffer dans la derniere perfection, je veux bien aller en Angleterre, etre gouvernante à quelque demoiſelle de qualité ; je ſuis faite pour cela, car je tiens de prés à la cour ; madame ma tante qui eſt frippiere à Paris, va quatre fois L'année à Verſailles pour acheter les vieilles robes de meſdames de France, et celles de leurs dames d'honneur. Elle les revendent à Paris, ce qui lui donne l'occaſion de ſe trouver toujours dans la ſocieté brillante. I am perſuaded, when you read what I have wrote, ſo far from

believing

believing it truth, you will think the ridicule outrée. Not in the leaſt, I aſſure you; I have ſo little of that talent, I could not have imagined any thing ſo ridiculous. The lady I was viſiting ſays ſhe knew one of theſe girls, who, not having the góut, and ſentiment requiſite to arrange the head of a merchant's wife at Lyons, had the good fortune to acquire a conſiderable penſion for forming the minds and manners of a whole family of Engliſh children. Theſe events, added the lady, are not very common, or we ſhould have no pretenſion to deſpiſe the loweſt French education; for with them ſobriety and the ſame religion, are always requiſites: not but I grant there are French women of honor to whom children, not to be educated in their principles, might be confided, but they are few; and being

people

people of birth and education, though diſtreſſed fortune, their modeſty, ſo far from preventing, leads them to a retirement, where not many will ſeek their merit to reward it: theſe were the lady's obſervations. Are not you, Madam, ſurprized the Engliſh ſhould make ſuch a point of learning the French language? Thoſe who cannot ſupport the expence of a gouvernante, ſometimes ſend their children to ſtarve in a convent; but they ſtarve a la Francoiſe. Mr. Locke thought too much was riſqued to accompliſh men in the fineſt languages: What would he have ſaid where the riſque is ſo much greater, and the acquiſition ſo much leſs. I grant the languages are ornaments, when they can be acquired without any hazard of eſſential qualifications. A woman may not only fill every duty in

life (that no one can diſpute) but, at the ſame time, make a moſt elegant figure in her family, and ſociety in general; yet have no idea of any language but her own. Amongſt many, I had the particular honor of one lady's acquaintance, who was ſo highly diſtinguiſhed for her wit, knowledge, and ſocial virtues; at a time when the charms of her ſex could no longer add to thoſe of her converſation, both ſexes, all ages, and the greateſt geniuſes in England, courted her ſociety; to the agreement of which they were as ſenſible as the French, to what they call Bel eſprit; this they honor to ſuch a degree, I have ſeen a woman of ſeventy charm a whole aſſembly by this quality, when a beautiful perſon, in the bloom of youth, could not attract the notice of a gentleman who ſat next her, he declaring,

claring, as the King, when a lady was preſented, whoſe beauty was her greateſt excellence, C'eſt une belle bête. His Majeſty is not celebrated for genius; but he is a Frenchman, conſequently, wit, or what amuſes as ſuch, is by him preferred to beauty. I do not agree with this nation in the extraordinary homage they pay to a brilliant underſtanding, as I think great efforts to ſhine in this light frequently deſtroys more eſſential merits, particularly in your ſex, Madam. Modeſty and good nature may render a woman happy, and all thoſe who are connected with her; but every other quality combined, cannot compenſate a deficiency in theſe. Do not imagine what I have ſaid proceeds from a deſire of limiting the underſtanding of women; no, I only wiſh them to acquire true knowledge, in

which every advancement is a progreſs towards virtue, vice proceeding frequently from ignorance. If people could be convinced virtue would make them more happy than vice, which is a certain truth, and that every deviation from the former, is a ſtep to miſery, none could purſue the latter. Virtue is the firſt requiſite to happineſs, but to ſay

Virtue alone makes happineſs below;

cannot be true, unleſs it was univerſal; in the preſent ſtate of the world, it is talking to children, and to them improperly; becauſe it is not exact truth: Experience will convince this doctrine is in ſome degree falſe; from thence they may judge it is entirely ſo. When we aſſert virtue will greatly heighten the bliſs of the moſt happy ſtate, and

as

as much alleviate the pain of the moſt diſtreſt, we ſpeak to reaſon and truth, them we ſhould ever addreſs: violent rhapſodies may affect the paſſions for a moment, but never can direct our actions to conſtant and uniform virtue. I beg pardon for this digreſſion, to a perſon whoſe life is a more pleaſing leſſon of every kind of merit, than any one can give, with the higheſt reſpect for that merit, and the moſt ſincere attachment to the excellencies which attend it, I am,

Madam,

*Lyons.*

Your moſt obedient, &c.

## LETTER XXVI.

THE Cathedral of Lyons has nothing worthy remark; for I do not eſteem the clock in that light. The canons are ſtiled Comtes de Lyons, and rank as ſuch; they are diſtinguiſhed by an order, which hangs upon the breaſt, by a ribband round the neck. They muſt prove ſeven generations of nobleſſe, by the father's ſide; which is much eaſier than the ſeize quartiers, though farther back: Several of them appear to be of Bretagne, where there is much ancient nobleſſe. Near this city is a houſe of Royal Chanoineſſes; the ſame proofs of birth are required for their admiſſion as the canons. They are educated for this ſcheme of life very

very young, but do not engage by vows till twenty-five; before that time they are at liberty to marry; and when the engagement is made, they do not ſpend their lives like other religious orders: they viſit, go to concerts, and all amuſements, as women of the world, except the theatre; which the confeſſors prohibit to the ſex, though they are not attended to often in this point. Some fortune is requiſite to theſe ladies, as they do not live in the common ſtyle of convents: thoſe houſes, in general, aſk a certain ſum; but the humor of being nuns declines ſo faſt, if they were not frequently received without a ſhilling, monaſteries would be very empty: It is ſaid Paris has two hundred leſs than it had ſome years ſince. If they were not convenient priſons for the children of the poor

nobleſſe, and their inferiors, who ape the manners of a rank to which they have no pretenſions, convents would ſoon be ſuppreſſed; the government appearing much inclined to make a better diſpoſition of their vaſt wealth. Wherever there are leſs than eight in a houſe, the monaſticks are obliged to join in another which is not compleat, and the revenues are ſeized for the public. It will be much for the public good if the preſent King ſhould reign many years longer; he, the parliament, and court in general, are inclined to weaken the power of the clergy; but they, by their influence over the people, oblige their adverſaries to take almoſt imperceptible ſteps to carry the point in view. At the Petit Souper the ſubject of converſation was the Pope's power: the Dauphin declared,

declared, he ſo highly honoured that authority, were he ſeated upon the throne, and commanded by his holineſs to reſign, he ſhould obey. Then, ſaid the King, by the ſame authority, Sir, I ſuppoſe you would uſurp it tomorrow, if you had an opportunity, and immediately ordered the Dauphin to withdraw, and baniſhed him the preſence for ten days: a puniſhment, where the tenderneſs of a father prevailed over the power and jealouſy of a King.

I was laſt night at the tragedy of Titus and Berenice; the language and ſentiments of this piece are, in general, pleaſing, but rather too languiſhing for the great character of Titus: He might, and I ſuppoſe did, love as well as a leſs hero; yet we have been ſo accuſtomed to think of him in a diſtin-

diſtinguiſhed and public light, it is impoſſible to approve of this action being ſingularized as the ſubject of a poem, with whatever circumſtances it might be attended; two lines in this piece, which I have heard often quoted, do not appear to me ſo high a compliment as they are generally eſteemed.

Depuis cinq ans entiers je la vois
Et crois toujours la voir pour la premiere fois.

A beloved perſon, who is ſuch as Berenice is deſcribed, attaches to ſo great a degree by long acquaintance, the pleaſure received from the firſt view of the moſt perfect beauty, muſt be faint, compared to the ſatisfaction and happineſs of ſeeing her. You find, Madam, I am willing to grant Titus might love to a greater height than Racine repreſents, I am perſuaded, he did; as

ſtrength

ſtrength and conſtancy of ſentiment are general attendants on ſuperiority of genius.——In the tragedy of Britannicus, love might very well make a principal action; it was natural to that prince's ſituation, and age, as advanced by Racine. The following lines are expreſſive, juſt, and natural, when Nero queſtions Narciſſus, Whether he really thinks the young prince loves? the courtier anſwers like a perſon accuſtomed, as he was, to obſerve and ſtudy the countenances, and from thence judge the diſpoſitions of mankind:

Je l'ai vu quelque fois s'arracher de ces lieux
Le cœur plein d'un courroux qu'il cachoit à vos yeux
D'une cour qui le fuit pleurant l'ingratitude,
Las de votre grandeur, et de ſa ſervitude,
Entre l'impatience et la crainte flottant;
Il alloit voir Junie et revenoit content.

In

In the ſtate of Britannicus love alone could produce the effect ſo well deſcribed, and in ſo few words, a merit which is not often Racine's, his ſenſe being frequently finiſhed before the line. This piece, and ſome others, are ſo good upon the whole, it would be unpardonable to ſeek for little defects, which, perhaps, are unavoidable in numerous compoſitions. I ſhall ſet out for Avignon to-morrow, as early after my arrival, as I can have an opportunity of examining what deſerves attention; I will communicate my ſentments, and have the pleaſure of ſaying, I am,

Madam,

*Lyons*

Your moſt obedient, &c.

P. S. Near this city is a convent of Chartreux, an order of monks, ſo rigid

gid, all animal food, and whatever is derived from animals, is prohibited. Yet ſome people think they live deliciouſly, having moſt excellent wines, and all the variety maigre will admit in the higheſt perfection. A viſit is a great treat to theſe monks, as it is one of the occaſions which gives libetty of ſpeech; of this ſome make ſo much uſe, a friend of mine ſays, he will never again enter into converſation with a perſon who has not always freedom of ſpeech; for it will take ſome days to recover from the violence ſuffered.

The END of the FIRST VOLUME.